

VOCAL SOUNDS

Byron

BY

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*Segnus irritant animos demissa per aurem,
Quam que sunt oculis subiecta —*

HOR. de Art. Poet.

L O N D O N:

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K, N, T, R, O

E R R A T U M.

Page 26, Line 10, for endless, read needless.

INTRODUCTION.

WHAT Horace says in my motto of the passions, may as well be applied to the imagination in the discernment of language, which we of this country take in more strongly by the eye than by the ear. We are careful enough of our orthography, not negligent of our matter, but our delivery of it by word of mouth comes from us mechanically as worked by the springs of custom, with scarce any discernment of the manner in which we perform it. So that we don't know when our vowels change voices among one another, by changing position as they stand before or behind a consonant ; whether our letters are single or double ; nor the difference between a diphthong and a single vowel. Having read somewhere that our English verse is iambic, we persuade ourselves

B that

that each of the five feet in this line of Pope's

Be stopt in phials, or transfix'd with pins,
 must be an iambus, that is, one short syllable and one long, without attending to the room they take up in the mouth. When we have pronounced a Latin word, we cannot tell whether we spoke it quick or slow, till we have searched our books for information, for we receive none from the notices of our ear.

This uncertainty has given birth to a new science added to the two well known before, orthography and philology, and which may be named philophony : the child lies as yet scarce half formed in the nursery of grammarians, but the tender nurture of it seems a fit employment for the Searches, for our family has been remarkable for the watchful ear, as well as the prying eye, ever since our great uncle Socrates heard the whispers of the dæmon sent from Jove.

I have

I have made some efforts to communicate my ideas in private conversation among my friends, but find nothing is to be done by occasional observations, nor without preparing oneself by a thorough consideration, and making it the principal business of one's thoughts for some time, therefore I have determined for a while to take down my telescope set to view celestial objects by the Light of Nature, and, taking the hearing trumpet, listen to the voice of nature, or custom, our second nature, in order to catch and mark down all the minute variations of sound she leads us through in our discourses familiar or solemn, together with the motions of our organs in producing them; hoping thereby to reduce the whole into a consistent and regular system.

ENGLISH not SPELT AS SPOKEN:

I should have entitled my performance letters, but that I should then have been understood of letters written, or characters

used upon paper; whereas my intention is to point out the letters spoken, or single sounds composing our syllables and words when we discourse with one another. But these two kinds of letters, the written and the spoken, do not always answer each other. For the character "o" has three different sounds in "bone, gone, done;" and the character "f" four in "mouse, rose, casual, sugar." On the other hand, the same sound is characterized by "a" in "ball," "o" in "often," "au" in "caught" and "ou" in "bought;" and the same sound by "f" in "often," "ff" in "off" and "gh" in "cough." Some of our letters are useless, as "gh" in "might," "l" in "half," "n" in "solemn;" and some simple sounds cannot be expressed without two characters, as "ng" in "song," "th" in "this" or "thin;" "sh" in "shoot."

For this reason it seems necessary to rectify our alphabet, not that I mean to alter the common manner of writing, but only

to gratify the curiosity of such as may be desirous of analyzing our language into its constituent elements, and to furnish them with a set of characters whereby they might express and distinguish every articulate sound that is current among us.

For which purpose I must strike out five consonants "k, q, w, x, y," substituting four others in their room, besides two more added to the vowels, so that my alphabet consists of 27 letters, one more than the vulgar; for though we count only 24, we have really 26, including "v" and "j." To the 6 new letters I have assigned the following characters,

"þ, ð, n, ſi, aw, v,"

which being of mine own chusing, whoever pleases may change them for others he judges more commodious; yet I have my reasons for the choice; for the two "th's" are expressed by the same characters which I apprehend our Saxon ancestors used for the very same sounds; "ng,

"sh" and "au" are only drawn into one cypher, and short "u" is none other than the Greek "upsilon," which possibly carried the same sound in their preposition "συ," as our short "u" does in the substantive "sun." I thought at first to have discarded "c" as its place might always be supplied by "k" or "s," but finding it a more convenient letter to write than "k," I have preserved it instead of that, craving leave to give it the force of "k," so that I may spell the words "kick, keck," by "cic, cec.".

As I struck out "x" for being a double letter, I would not have "g" liable to the same objection, which it would be while used as in "gentle, giant," where it has the force of a "d" and French "j" united, but wish it might be pronounced even before "e" and "i" as we do in the words "get" and "give."

I do not see the necessity of giving the names we do to all our letters, as "de, ef, atch,

atch, zed," for most of them may be sounded alone without aid of any others; "g" is the hardest to a beginner, who may fancy himself making a noise like one inclinable to puke, but will grow familiar upon use; for I knew a man who when having occasion to say "yes" affected to turn the "y" into a "g," which he drew out sometimes in a long note for eight or ten seconds before he produced the rest of his "yes."

But there are three letters "c, p, t," which cannot be pronounced alone, and I have given them double names "ecce" or "ecca," "ippi," or "ippy," and "itti," or "itty;" in order that either branch may be taken as they are found to follow or precede a vowel, so that I would teach a learner to spell "crack" by "ca, r, a, ec," and "pap" by "py, a, ip."

ALPHABET

ALPHABET REFORMED.

This being premised, I may now exhibit my alphabet in the following order;

“ a, b, ecce, aw, d, ð, e, f, v, g, h, i, l, m, n, ñ, o, ippi, r, s, si, itti, þ, u, z, j, v.”

The powers of these several letters cannot be better explained than by examples of common words wherein they are sounded in the manner I wish them always to be. But we must begin with the vowels, with which we shall have most trouble, those of the old alphabet being more interchangeable among one another than the consonants, and susceptible of quantity, for we pronounce them long in some syllables, and short in others.

QUANTITY.

QUANTITY.

But I find it very difficult to make my countrymen comprehend this affair of quantity, because not regarded in our metre; sometimes they will determine it by the accent, and insist that "ve" in "verily" must be long, because it is accented; and at other times they will argue, that "would" must be long, because, say they, "ou" is a diphthong, and "ld" would make the syllable long by position if it were not so by nature. Thus through fondness for their skill in orthography, they consider the spelling instead of consulting their ear, the sole proper judge in matters of quantity, and if they would try the cause at this bar, they would find no difference between the words "would" and "wood," to which latter there do not lie the same objections. Or if they still pretend that "oo" is a diphthong, let them consider whether it is not as much a simple sound in "blood"

“blood” and “stood,” as the “u” in “bud” and “full.”

— Nor will it do to take out your watch and try how many short syllables are equal to a certain number of long ones, for this is an uncertain way of measuring, the consonants will interfere and a man may speak quick or slow without changing the quantity of his vowels, which depends not so much upon their absolute length, as their comparative among one another. You will discover it easiest by drawing out your vowels a little beyond their usual length, which you will find more disgusting in the short than in the long, as in “ha --- and” than in “comma --- and ;” or by transposing them into each other’s places, as in this sentence, “ I shall obey any commands that come from your hands,” speaking the “a” in “commands” as you do in “man,” and that of “hands” as you do in “half ;” your ear will soon convince you of a faulty pronunciation.

We

We are misled at our entrance upon learning by our absurd manner of spelling, for our letters which ought to be the component sounds of our syllables, as the notes are of bars in music, often carry a very different sound in composition from that they had when single, and so do not really form the compounds whereof we use them as ingredients, thus "a, n, d" makes "aind" rather than "and," and "g, o, n, e" produces "jony" instead of "gone." And in our horn-books children are taught to change both the sound and the quantity of the vowels as placed before or after a consonant; "ab, eb, ib, ob, ub" being different in both respects from "ba, be, bi, bo, bu."

But before I enter upon this matter, I must pass on to my own vowels, because without their aid I shall not be able to set down the variations found among the common ones upon paper. How much soever quantity may be despised or unobserved among

among us, it certainly prevails as much in our language as ever it did in the Greek or Latin ; some words of different signification are distinguishable to the ear only by the quantity of their vowels, as in these sentences, “ Would you *have* me *halve* this orange ? ” “ I *can’t* endure this *cant*.” “ *None* that are *known* to me.” “ *Sam*, sing *a psalm*.” “ *Mary* be *merry*.” “ *Look* at *Luke*.” “ *A fool* is *full* of himself.” “ *He* *has been* *dissecting* a *bean*.” And that line in Milton,

“ *That would be woo’d*, and not unsought be
“ *won*.”

Therefore I would begin with my scholars by making them pronounce the single vowels long and short “ ā, ā, aū, aū, &c. leading them thereinto by proper examples of words wherein they are so spoken, though perhaps written with other characters, as “ ā, ant ; ā, and ; aū, all ; aū, on ; ē, were ; ē, end ; ī, machine ; ī, chin ; ō, old ; ō, only ; ” which is the only syllable

table begun with an “*o*,” and even this the North-country people would deprive us of by calling it “*äunly* ;” it is found in the middle of some words, as “*lo*” in “*obloquy, soliloquy* ;” in “*monopoly*” the first “*o*” is a long one, the second is a short “*aw*” and the third is a true short “*o*.”

Men of reading use several short “*o*’s,” as in “*none, wholly* ;” the clergy are equally divided upon “*acknowledge*” in the confession, one half making the “*o*” short but the other joining with the ladies to read it “*acknäulege*.” ’Tis a wonder this letter should not have come more into vogue since French has been so fashionable among us, which abounds with it, as “*bon ami, mon enfant, etonnement* ;” but it seems more wonderful that grammarians, professing the art of letters should thrust a short “*o*” into Latin words where Virgil, Horace, and Ovid have made it long, as “*nos, vos, multos*.”

Our

Our next vowel is “ū, rude; ū, push,” the last is “v, shut;” I do not recollect it ever used long in our language, unless in the words “windūs, fellūs, mellūs,” and “billūs,” as spoken by some solemn people, yet we can draw it out to a great length upon particular occasions, as when the watchman calls “Past ten v-v-v clock,” or when a man hesitates till he hits upon some hard name, as “This account was sent by Mr. v-v-v Schlotzikoff, a Russian.”

This short “v” is easiest pronounced of all the vowels for reasons that will appear hereafter, and therefore is a great favorite with my countrymen, who tho not lazy are very averse to trouble, wishing to do as much work with as little pains as possible; it is commonly inserted between “ē, ī, ō ū” and “r,” as in “there, beer, fire, more, poor, pure, our,” which we pronounce “thevr, bivr, fivr, movr, puvr, vuvr.” “ir” is almost always turned into “vr,” as “fir, fur; dirty, dvrty;” ēr is so like to “vr” that

you cannot distinguish them unless when accented, for if one was to say “prosper, “adverse, to join in friendly converse” you would not perceive the changes, but “prosperity, adversity, to converse as friends,” would offend your ear grievously: and there are none of the vowels but what are often changed into “v” in common talk, tho preserving their genuine sound in a grave discourse, as in this sentence, “ ‘Tis frivilous to endeavour putting man or “ woman upon never stirring in London for “ fear of their cloaths being covered with soot,” which at a tea-table we should probably deliver thus, “ ‘Tis frivilous to endeavour putting “ man or woman upon never stirring in London “ for fear of their cloaths being cover’d with soot.”

The very small particles spoken hastily scarce ever retain their original sound, a farmer will tell you “ a hog wont stray so far “ from home as an ox or a flock of sheep.”

Our ancestors were fonder of diphthongs than ourselves, so that we have more of them

them upon paper than in our mouths, the old-fashioned “ ae, ai, au, ea, ee, ei, eo, “ ia, ie, io, oa, oe, oo, ou, ui,” we often change into a simple sound, as in “Caesar, “ main, caught, bear, seen, receive, yeo-“ man, impartial, believe, cushion, boat, “ Phoebus, root, favour, fruit.” Of those we retain I can recollect no more than “ oi, voice ; i, ice ; ou, noun,” and a single “ ai ” in the interjection “ay,” besides those characterised by “w” and “y,” as in “ wash, were, wet, sweet, yellow, yes, “ yoak, yonder,” and so forth ; all which I would write “ vawis, vis, nuun, ai, uawsi, “ uēt, suīt, iēlo, iis, iōc, iawnder,” &c. and “ ē, “ ī, ī, ū,” “ mare, or mayor, mevr ;” “ dear, “ or deer, divr ;” “ more, or mower, mour ;” “ sure, or shooer, [maker of shoes] fiuor ;” but the diphthongs “or” and “iu” are characterised sometimes by a single vowel, sometimes by two, and sometimes by a syllable, as “ use, ensue, ewe, yew, you, I, my, ei-“ ther, eye.”

We

We have likewise some triphthongs, as in
 “wound, *wound*, year, *wor*, fewer, *fiuor*, queer,
 “*cuior* ;” and one tetraphthong “wire,” or
 “quire,” “*uuior*, *cuiuor*,” unless the latter be
 dissyllables, for I think “hire” and “dire”
 have as fair a claim to be counted such as
 “higher” and “dyer,” tho we will not
 allow them the same rank in verse, unless
 by a fancied, not a real contraction by a
 apostrophe, but if you repeat

“ For high renown the heaven-born poets strive,
 “ Actors for higher [*hire*] in toils incessant live,”
 a person may think you mean to reflect
 upon the players when you intend them a
 compliment, or vice versa: or in describ-
 ing a drunken quarrel if you end with
 these lines,

“ From their enflaming pots fresh broils arose,
 “ Knives follow’d fists, and cuts succeeded blows,
 “ The blood that streamed from the gash pro-
 “ found
 “ With scarlet “*dire*” distain’d their garments
 “ round,
 “ Sad scarlet “*dyer*” he, who gave the wound.”

should you in reading them transpose the [dire] [dyer] into each others places, you would not perceive the change ; such is the force of custom and imagination to debauch the ear, that it does not know when one and one syllable make two !

I return now to the common vowels, with which I need do no more than set down the sounds given them on first learning to read expressed in my own characters, whereby the variations they undergo as standing single or in composition before or after the several consonants will be made appear at one view.

“ a, ē ; e, ī ; i, u ; o, ō ; u, iu ; ba, bē ; ab,
 “ äb ; be, bi ; eb, ēb ; bi, bu ; ib, īb ; bo,
 “ bō ; ob, aüb ; bu, biu ; ub, ub ; ”

Yet it must be owned they undergo farther variations and mutual changes among one another when they come to be compounded in words, as “ bar, bat, fall, “ caught,” when shortned into “ cot, bate, “ many, cribbage,” called “ cribbridge,” “ liar,” like to “ lyre.” “ W” is

“W” is always esteemed a consonant tho sounding as much like a vowel in the old “perswade” as in the modern “persuade,” and in “thwack” as in “quack;” nor can I find any difference between the French “oui,” and the English “we.”

“Y” is rejected for being an amphibious animal, one while a liquid vowel, then again ranking with the solid consonants; “I spy a yoak of oxen plying yonder:” and indeed “y” seems of no use among the vowels, unless for the convenience of potesters, because it will rhyme both to “e” and “i,”

“ Disease and guilt our sages all agree
“ Press heavier than contented poverty.

“ By foul debauch far greater numbers die,
“ Than by the pinch of starving poverty.”

My consonants being little different from the vulgar, it will suffice to repeat them, and subjoin after each examples wherein their sounds are contained; “b,

C 2 “ bribe;

"bribe; ecce, crack; d, dread; ð, their;
 "f, fife; g, gird; h, hot; k, lilly; m,
 "mump; n, none; ñ, sing; ippi, pope;
 "r, roar; s, sowse, sh, ship; itti, treat;
 "þ, thoth; z, zeal; j, measure."

The vulgar consonants, some few of them are unsteady; "f" in "of" ordinarily becomes "v;" "f" is often converted into "z," "rose, grows, positive," so that tho "z" very seldom makes its appearance upon paper, we have it frequently in our mouths, which contributes greatly to the softening of our language, for I take "z" to be the true Grecian zeta, which the Romans acknowledged to be a mellower letter than any they had belonging to them; but sometimes "s" takes the form of "j," as in "composure;" sometimes of "sh," as "sugar;" "t" has the force of "sh" in "nation;" and "z" that of "s" in the single word "raze;" probably for distinction sake, because "s" had pre-occupied his place in "raise."

Having

Having explained my letters, I shall go on with my horn-book, and proceed to join them, specifying with the letter "a" carried thro all the vowels, from whence the rest may be easily imitated ; but I would teach my children to pronounce their little syllables both long and short, that they may not be obliged to change them afterwards, when they come to join them into words as " nā, nāsty ; nă, năturăl ; " ān, ānswer ; ān, ānnuăl ; naū, naūghty ; naū, " nominal, naūmināl ; aūn, awning, aūnig ; " aūn, onward, aūnuard ; nē, nation, nēfiōn ; " nē, nēver ; ēn, āncient ; ēn, engine, ēndjīn ; " nī, needle, nīdl ; nī, knitting, nītiōg ; īn, e'en, " īn ; īn, īnner ; nō, notion, nōfiōn ; nō, know- " ledge, nōlēdj ; ōn, ōwner ; ōn, ōnly ; nū, " noosed, nūzēd ; nū, nooky, nūci ; ūn, noon- " tide, nūntyid ; ūn, tunicle, tūnicl ; nū, nutting, " nūtiōg ; ūn, ūntil."

For the common horn-book is far from supplying the child with a compleat set of the sounds whereof his language is to be composed ; which must needs render his

subsequent progress more tedious and perplexing, and be the cause of those many errors and differences in orthography a-bounding among us.

The pretence that by adhering to the found we should lose our etymology is no ground of objection, for that is a matter of no concern to the generality, and learned men are not at a loss to know, that “ York, alms, bishop,” are derived from “ Eboracum, eleemosynæ, episcopus,” without obliging their wives and daughters to write them “ eorac, ealmesnes, pif-“ cop.”

But men of learning are so little attentive to the sounds used in conversation, that when they go to reject a superfluous letter out of two found upon paper, they will drop ye the useful one, and retain the superfluous, as in “ favour, honour, la-“ bour,” which they write “ favor, ho-“ nor, labor,” but are ordinarily pro-nounced “ favur, honur, labur.”

And

And I shall take notice of another scholastic error imported from Tully, who tells ye, there can be no syllable without a vowel, never considering that the same rules may not be applicable to all languages, for certainly we have several syllables which, tho spelt with a vowel, it is utterly lost in our mouths, as in this line of Pope,

“ And lodge such daring souls in “little” men ?”
and this of Milton,

“ O'er many a “frozen,” many a fiery Alp ;”
which last, by the way, proves what I had advanced before, that “fire” is a dissyllable for “fiery” is nothing more than “fire” with a “y” at the end.

FORMATION of SOUNDS.

Having settled the powers of my letters I may give farther scope to curiosity by examining in what manner our organs produce them. One would think there could be nothing curious in telling people what

what they do every day, and every hour of the day ; but experience testifies that we do not always advert upon things we perform by constant habit and in a manner mechanically ; I have found difficulty in examining my own motions exactly, and have met with people who would hold an argument in what manner we both performed the same operation ; others, when I have been so lucky to find their ready concurrence with my observations, still mortify me with a question,

“ What need tell us of all this ? does not every body know we make an “ l ” with our tongue, and an “ m ” with our lips ? ”

But however this matter may be less than curiosity to my present countrymen, it may prove more than curiosity to persons of other times and places, by affording some help towards guiding them into our pronunciation. I have often wished Tully and Quintilian had been more minute

nute in describing the powers and formation of their letters ; it would probably have decided whether we or foreigners pronounce their vowels rightly ; what was the force of "v" and "j" ; why "h" was counted no letter : what was the difference between "cui" and "qui" ; "cum" and "quum" ; whether "c" and "g" had not the same sound before "e" and "i" as before "a, o," or "u" ; how "m" could be made to take up no room in a verse without prejudice to the measure ; for as we read the line

" Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui
" lumen ademptum,"

there are certainly three syllables more than the six feet can contain.

Possibly too they might have given us some insight into the Greek, whether the aspirate had the same effect with their "h" ; whether Greek verse should be read according to the accent ; whether words were

were differently pronounced in verse and in prose ; what was the effect of the grave accent ; why “ zeta ” and “ ν psilon ” were esteemed sweeter sounds than any they had in Latin ; how “ e psilon ” differed from “ e ta,” and “ o micron ” from “ o mega ;” what was the force of the “ di-gamma Eolicum ” and “ Theocritan a,” and whether the latter were the same as the English “ a.”

It were ~~endless~~^{need}, and indeed impossible, to describe the exact posture of our organs in making the vocal sounds : I shall aim no farther than to remark some particulars whereby they may be distinguished from each other. Every body knows that our breath is the foundation of all, for language is nothing else than breath variously modulated in its passage ; while our lungs only are employed the breath passes silently along without being heard, but if the passage be straitned by raisng up the hinder part of the tongue near that bone which terminates the roof of the mouth, it makes a blowing noise something like that

that of a bellows, expressed by the character “ *h* :” if the straitning be made at the throat by drawing back the root of the tongue as far as you can, it will form our “ *v* ;” for when, while pronouncing “ *h* ,” you slide a finger under your chin, till it reaches the gullet, and then change from “ *h* ” to “ *v* ,” you will feel the finger pushed downwards, the gullet seeming to fwell, occasioned by the tongue crowding in upon it, whereby the top of the throat is opened into, and becomes a part of the mouth, and the sound you utter is not a blowing noise, but a tone as of some pipe.

These two “ *h* ” and “ *v* ,” I apprehend to be the roots whereout by the aid of three stops, all our other vocal sounds are made to spring, which I shall divide into two classes according as they grow from either root, and beg leave to call them the spirate and the sonorous, including all the vowels within the latter, for they are all only so many “ *v* 's ” diversly modulated in passing

passing through the mouth ; but the same modulations of “ h ” form them all in whispering, which since they are not ranked among vocal sounds cannot fall within my present plan.

If on pronouncing “ v ” you change to “ *av* ” you will find your under jaw drop, and your lips expand in a nearly circular form ; if from thence to “ o, ” you will find the corners of your lips draw in so as to turn into an oval ; if to “ u, ” you will find the orifice still more contracted, and the lips a little thrust forwards, the tongue in all these three operations lying close at the bottom of the mouth ; if from thence you pass to “ a, ” the lips at the corners will widen so as to form the long diameter of an ellipsis, the jaw remaining as before, and the tongue rising and spreading a very little ; the transition from thence to “ e, ” is effected only by raising the hinder part of the tongue in the manner you did for an “ h, ” and that to “ i ” by throwing the tongue into a convex, correspond-

ing

ing with the hollow roof of the mouth.

The muscles of the tongue and cheek being active in the other vowels, but not in “*u*” shows why this is the easiest performed, and therefore seems in high favour with my ease-loving compatriots, who so far surpass the Laconians that I suppose they would be ashamed of having exerted three muscles, when they might have expressed their meaning with two.

I am apt to suspect that in the ancient languages the “*h*” accompanied a succeeding vowel throughout the whole extent of its sound, and therefore was counted no letter, being not spoken distinctly, as we do in the interjection “*ho* ;” where we finish the “*h*” before we begin the “*o* ;” it is certainly possible to begin and blend them together, as I have found upon trial ; it seems indeed very awkward, and makes a disagreeable sound, but this

may

may be for want of use, nor should I despair, if it were worth while, to bring myself in a week's time to do it currently and smoothly,

It will be proper to remark here, that in sounding the vowels “*i*” and “*u*,” we can raise the under jaw and tongue so as to straiten the passage for the breath, without changing the letter, but only giving it a little sharper note; in this manner we perform those diphthongs which are written with a “*w*” or “*y*,” and then by a jerk or sudden fall of the jaw, we proceed to the other vowel of the diphthong; this enables us to make a diphthong of one vowel repeated in its two several notes, as “*i*” in “*i*ıld, yield; *i*is, yes; “*u*” in “*u*đ, woo’d; *u*đ, wood.”

If in the middle of an “*h*” you suddenly raise the hinder part of the tongue so high as quite to close the passage, it will make an “*ecce*,” commonly written “*k*,”

the

the like stoppage with the whole rim of the tongue against the gum, just behind the teeth, forms an “ itti,” or “ t ;” or with the lips pressing against each other, produces an “ ippi,” or “ p.” While holding the mouth in these postures you cannot bring out any sound, therefore I call these three letters “ c, t, p,” the silent stops, because their sound is instantaneous like the stroke of a hammer, and you must remain silent till some farther change be made in the position of your organs.

When the stop “ p ” is a little opened, still continuing your “ h,” you will make a noise like that of a smoker on first puffing out his mouthful of smoke. I must not reckon this an articulate sound, because not current among us, but I have some suspicion that this was the Greek “ phi,” for supposing it exactly unison with “ f,” why should not the ancient Romans have written “ filosofus,” as well as the moderns do “ filosofo ?” And I once

met

met with a man who affected frequently to speak his initial “ p’s” in this manner, so that they seemed accompanied by an “ f,” he would say “ Pfeter pfence pfroved a “ vast pfrofit to the Pfope.” But he ran it off more glibly and correctly than you or I could have done.

The straitning or imperfect stoppage being made by the under lip approaching near the teeth generates an “ f;” but this letter may come into being a different way, as I can testify upon experience, for since time by help of my grandmother’s sugar-plumbs has drawn all my teeth, I am forced to make my “ f” with the under lip thrust up a very little way behind the upper, and in this manner, when like old Appius Cæcus called to assist at a special sessions, I can pronounce the words “ fine, forfeiture, flogging,” plainly enough, to the great terror of delinquents.

On opening the stop "t" your "h" becomes a "p;" then drawing back the tip of your tongue gently along the roof of your mouth, still preserving a narrow passage for the breath, it will gradually turn into "s," and from thence into "f." These four "f, p, s, f," are spirates, as being generated from "h:" of which it is a corroborating proof, that although single sounds, three of them are written with two letters, whereof "h" is one, "ph, " "th, sh."

Let us proceed next to the sonorous consonants generated from "v," which are more numerous than the former. If having made the stop "p," you throw the mouth into the posture proper for "v," it will produce a "b;" from the stop "t," a "d," and from the stop "c" a "g." These three I call sonorous stops as being not momentous strokes, but capable of being drawn out like the notes of an organ

to a length proportionable to the cavity there is to receive the breath coming from the lungs, which in “g” is smallest, being only that little space between the roof of the mouth and the throat; in “d” it is enlarged to behind the teeth; and in “b” to the lips: so that after having sounded “g” as long as you can, you may proceed to “d,” and after that to “b,” making a kind of syllable “gdb;” while the throat remains in this sonorous posture, “þ” becomes a “ð,” “s” a “z,” and “f” a “j;” upon opening a passage through the nose, “p” turns into “m,” “t” into “n,” and “c” into “g.”

Possibly this might be the digamma Eolicum, which was made up of two capital gammas, the one wrote upon, but lower than the other, thus F, and we see it bears a near affinity to “g,” being formed with the same position of the tongue and throat. It was esteemed to have a soft sound, and so we find it, therefore we constantly use it

it instead of "n" before "k" and "g," as in "sing, think, stronger, cheesemonger;" yet we could not endure it at the beginning of a syllable, for whoever intending to say "Nathan gnawed nine nasty knuckles," should pronounce "nathan gnawed nine nasty guckles," would be blamed grievously for speaking through the nose.

On opening from "t" or "d" at the sides of the tongue, still holding the tip close, there issues forth an "l;" upon rendering the end of the tongue limber, so that it will shake like a rag with the bellows, it will rattle out "r," but this requiring a strong stream of breath to perform, makes it the most laborious letter of all, and consequently as much out of our good graces as I said "v" was in them; you shall find people drop the "r" in "fuz, patjal, savants, wost, wosted, back-wad," and many other words, and whenever retained we speak it so gently that

you scarce hear a single reverberation of the tongue.

It would make an Englishman sweat to repeat this line of Ennius in the manner he ought

“ *Africa terribili tremit, horrida terra tumultu.*
“ *tu.*”

“ *Thro Afric drear terrific turmoils ran.*”

but a Welchman would rattle it off manfully, till he made the sound an echo to the fence.

All the letters except the six stops may be drawn out as long as you have breath to give them sound; some of our vowels are words of themselves, as “ *a* ” commonly written “ *ah* ;” “ *aw* ” an interjection of forbidding; “ *e* ” written “ *a* ” and often pronounced “ *u* ,” or written “ *eh* ,” an interjection of contemptuous censure; and “ *o :* ” and some words might be more aptly expressed by a single consonant than by our manner of spelling them, for a “ *hiss* ”

“ hiss” is nothing more than a continued “s,” nor “pish” than “f,” or sometimes “ph.” I have been diverted with seeing our comic writers run variations in characterizing one poor sound by “em, hum, “umph, humph,” all which might much better be expressed by the single letter “m:” and when a man hums a tune, he does not run on with a repetition of “hum, “hum, hum,” but only shuts his lips which produces a continued “m” all the time he is singing.

VOCAL SOUNDS in MUSIC.

For our musical sounds are performed by the action of different organs from those of the vocal, therefore both may be blended together, and any one of the sonorous letters may be carried thro all the notes of the gamut: nor is it unprecedented for people when practising by themselves to “n” a tune, or “g” a tune, as well as to “m” a tune. You cannot do the same with thespirate, for if you go to try you will run them into the correspondent

respondent sonorous, "p" into "b" or "m," "f" into "v," "t" into "ð, d, n," or "þ," "s" into "z," "f" into "j," "c" into "g" or "g," and "h" into "w."

In songs the spirates come in as so many rests between the music, when they come in at all, but are frequently dropt, as indeed are all the other letters, by your very exquisite singers; for which reason I who am no connoisseur could never feel myself transported by Farinelli, because I thought his music unnatural, as resembling more the pipes of an organ than a human voice.

SOUNDS DISUSED.

Our ancestors had two more letters, the spirale "c," probably the Græcan "chi," from whence sometimes transposed into Latin, and the sonoro-spirale "g," written "ch, gh." These will not now pass for articulate sounds, being wholly disused among

mong us: should we go about to pronounce them we should do it very awkwardly, and be charged with speaking in the throat; but if any body has a mind to learn I would recommend him to take a pretty Dutch girl for his school-mistress, perhaps he may find them not so ungraceful in the mouth of a fair speaker. We still retain many of them upon paper, but in reading turn the former into "thy" as in " such changes, such thendjiz," and the latter sometimes into "f," as in " laugh, cough," but oftener drop it entirely, as in " high, light, taught."

Our organs are capable of forming other sounds, which will be counted articulate wherever practised, for there is scarce a language which has not some particular letter unknown to its neighbours, besides that there is a variety of tones and whines distinguishing the natives of one province from those of another, even when uttering the very same vocal sounds. 'Tis said the

Chinese

Chinese and Japanese use a multitude of tones and inflexions of voice, which makes their language resemble singing. Kämpfer tells us the syllable "Po," is pronounced sixteen different ways, each whereof has its several signification, so that it is impossible to frame a universal alphabet, unless one could know and find characters for all the various tones that are in currency among all nations upon earth.

But I confine myself to the language of my own country, and in that to the articulation, not meddling with the various tones, affectations and particularities of pronunciation : for I neither am acquainted with them all, nor can imitate those I have heard, nor can find marks upon paper to distinguish the few I could imitate, and am subjected to disadvantages by the best speakers not always agreeing in their manner of sounding the same words, and by the changes made in the syllables when examined apart, from what they were when

when run currently together in a word; a man that sees me spell "nobody" with "n, o, b, u, d, i," may be apt to urge that "nobody" is compounded of the two words "no" and "body," but who ever calls it "buddy?" and upon my putting him in mind that he does not pronounce "bo-dy" but "baw-dy," he will say, does not "be, o" always make "bo," and "de, wy, die?"

Add to this that the spirit of opposition of which my native soil is almost as fertile as of industry, sagacity, judgement and other excellent qualities, will often beguile a lively young fellow insensibly to eat his words and alter his language: for upon charging such a one with saying "yis" instead of "yes," he has denied the fact, facing me down that he always speaks it "yes" and has actually done so during the course of our dispute, but upon occasion afterwards, when not biassed by his eagerness to confute me, he has returned to his "yis" as currently as the rest of the world.

JUNCTION

JUNCTION OF LETTERS.

A few observations may suffice upon the junction of our letters. "C" before "h" takes the form of "th, such, torch," except in words of Grecian extract "scheme, school;" between "s" and "i" or "e" it is lost "science, scene." We speak "wh" by the figure "hysteron proteron," anglice, preposterously, a cart before the horse, as in "when, huēn, whim, huim;" before my "u" the "w" is dropt, as in "who, hū," for "who are" spoken quick so as to make it one syllable sounds the same as "where," and in "hood" as spoken by the scholar or the beau, and "who wou'd" the three sounds are distinguished only by having one, two or three "u's" in them, "huēr, hūd, hūūd."

"T" before "i" and another vowel does not become an "s," as vulgarly taught, but the "sh" in "fashion" or "c"

"*c*" in "proficient," as "martial nation," "martial men." "*s*" coming after a sonorous consonant at the end of a word softens into "*z*," I believe always when final in writing, as "winds, calls, shoes, fans," but not always when final only in the sound, as "goose, use, worse, rehearse;" when coming after a spirite it retains the sound, as in "spots, drops, jacks;" but whenever doubled in genitives and plurals it resumes the gentle tone of "*z*" and forms an additional syllable, as in "goes-*iz* wing, ox-*siz* horn, Mo-*ziziz* seat, St. Jame *ziz* epistle, a batallion of Mar-*siz*."

As an instance to shew how much our cohoiseurs in language judge of sound by the sight, I shall observe that they can allow "gooses" and "uses" to make two syllables in verse because they read an "*e*" between the "*s's*," but not ox's" nor "Mars's," because by the strength of imagination they make the apostrophe turn sound into silence.

It.

It seems extraordinary that we should have words ending with “*ct, pt;*” one would think one silent stop could not be produced immediately after another; indeed when followed by an open letter as in “*prompts,*” the “*s*” shows from what stop it took its rise, and at the end of a sentence perhaps when we have done speaking, the muscles of the tongue may relax a moment sooner than the breath ceases to push against the stop, whence issues forth a very faint blowing which might be called the ghost of an “*h,*” or the drawing the lips asunder; or hind part of the tongue from the roof of the mouth in order to pass from “*p*” or “*c*” to “*t,*” may produce a little faintish smack.

Why should not custom and imagination quicken the ear to hear the ghost of a sound, as well as melancholy and superstition sharpen the eye to see the ghost of a body? The truth I take to be, that we

are

are directed to find the "t" by the context, without information from any of our senses, and that if a man would pronounce the single word "dropt" or "sackt" and then ~~keep~~ his organs a while exactly in the same posture as they were left in by those words, nobody could tell whether he meant to say "drop" or "dropt," "sack" or "sackt."

Nevertheless, I flatter myself that any person who would take the pains to be acquainted with my alphabet, would be enabled thereby to read any speech or composition in the same manner, that is, the same articulate, I do not say the same tonical, musical, or rather anti-musical sounds, as the speaker had delivered, or the author would read it himself, and even to follow them through whatever peculiarities of utterance they may have adopted.

In order that he may make a trial I shall here subjoin a specimen written line by line in the common way, and in my own, and I have hammered it into verse to render his task the smoother; it contains a few lines that may be of some little service to young persons for writing familiar letters. But if he find nothing engaging either in the matter or poetry, yet it may afford him one entertainment of supreme delight to an Englishman, in finding how many faults I commit in my pronunciation. The quantity of vowels being a material point, I do not throw a tittle upon every "i," reserving my tittle for marks of a long quantity to save trouble, because we speak most of our vowels short; therefore he will please to look on all those as short vowels, or doubtful, that is, sounding well in either measure, which have not this badge of distinction over them.

As the smooth river glides along the plains,

"Az ȝi smuð river gluidz elong ȝi plenz,"

So mové with ease the epistolary strains;

"So muv uð iz ȝi ipistolari strenz;

Neatness and elegance is all their pride,
 " Nitnes and eligans iz ául ðer prvid,"
 These once attain'd, they ask not ought beside.
 " Ðiz yuns atend ðe ásc naut aut bisvid."
 No gaudy trim of rich parterres they need,
 " Nô gaudi trim aov ritfi parterz ðe nid,"
 Content with beauties of the decent mead.
 " Cawtent uij biutiz aov ði disent mid."
 Clear and concise the narrative proceeds,
 " Clir and cawnsvis ði naretiv prosidz ;"
 In streams pellucid, free from soil and weeds ;
 " In strimz pelusid fri fræm savil and uidz ;"
 The well-bred jest knows aptly where to end,
 " Ði uel-bred djest noz aptli huér tu end,"
 Shames not the maiden, nor disgusts the friend ;
 " siemz naut ði medn, naur disgusts ði frend ;"
 The cheerful figures that spontaneous flow,
 " Ði tsierful figiurz dat spontenius flo,"
 Cover, but not conceal, the thought below ;"
 " Cuvor, but naut caunsil ði jaut belo ;"
 Allusion brings forgotten scenes to view,
 " Alujun bringz saurgastn finz tu viu,
 Recals past pleasure, or creates a new ;
 " Ricauz past plejur, aur crietz e niu,"
 And irony that turns away his face,
 " And viron dat turnz euë huz fes ;"
 Chides but to sooth, and censures still to praise.
 " Thividz bat tu sūð, and sensiürz stul tu prez."

The language drawn from every day's discourse,

“ *Þi languedj dráun fræwm everi déz discörs,*”
But cull'd with judgement from that turbid source:

“ *But cold urðdjudgment fræwm ðat turbid furs:*”

No low-bred phrase, nor incoherence rude,

“ *Nó lō-bred fréz nævr incohirens rúd,*”

Nor ungrammatic structure may intrude:

“ *Nævr ungramatic struðtiur me intrud:*”

Nor affectation spread her tawdry paint,

“ *Nævr afæktéfún spred hvr tåudri pént,*”

Nor pedantry with musty dulness taint:

“ *Nævr pedantri uið musti dulnes tént:*”

Yet knowledge or of science, or of men,

“ *iet noledj aor aor sviens, aor aor men,*”

Itself unseen, may prompt the tutor'd pen.

“ *itself unsin me prompt ði tutawrd pen.*”

If argument be needful, let it press

“ *if argument be nidful let it pres*”

With inborn weight, not urg'd with eagerness:

“ *uið inbærn uét, nævt urdjed uið igurnes:*”

If kind professions, fetch them from the heart,

“ *if cwind profesionz, fetfi ðem fræwm ði hært,*”

Nature's pure growth, unfabricate by art.

“ *Næturz piür grøþ, unfabricete bei árt.*”

Yet

Yet let discretion teach you to beware

“ Iet let discrefion titfi iū tu bieuēr”

Lest rash engagements should your steps ensnare ;

“ Lest rasi engēdjments fiud iūr steps ensnēr ;

Lest the unguarded page should more convey,

“ Lest ði vngārded pēdj fiud mōr cāvnēr,”

Than e'er you thought of, or was meet to say ;

“ ðan ēr iū þaut aav, aav uawz mit tu sē :

The note dispatcht returns no more again,

“ þi nōt dispatfit ritvns no mōr egēn,”

And second thoughts shall wish to mend in vain.

“ And second þauts fial uifi tu mend in vēn.”

Perhaps the gentle reader will be frightened at reading such uncouth characters as I present him with, but I do not desire he should accept them for common use, nor do I wish to have him alter his usual manner either of writing or speaking ; I only mean to supply him with a method whereby he might ascertain the true sounds of his letters, and not fancy himself saying “ o” where he really uses the French “ à,” nor “ u” when he adopts the French “ e” feminine, nor that

he must make two distinct motions of his organs to bring out “ sh,” “ th” or “ ng,” nor give implicit faith to the old woman who taught him that “ t” assumes the voice of “ s” before “ ion.” But then to give my regulator a fair trial I must entreat him to catch the sound of his words and syllables as he repeats them currently in the verse, and not take them out singly to con them over three or four times by themselves, for if he does so he will certainly change their measure.

MEASURE OF ENGLISH VERSE.

Our English verse is generally agreed to be the iambic, not of the sort called the pure, but wherein the iambus chiefly prevails, and I apprehend a line runs smoothest when it has fewest of other feet. Now the line

“ The note dispatcht returns no more again.”
contains only one spondee, every other
foot

foot being an iambus as I read it, and I never was criticized for so doing, nor might a person who would read it otherwise himself perceive the difference, for we are so used to little variations in this matter that we do not presently take notice of them.

But if he goes to scan the verse and call over the syllables distinctly, he will make them all spondees, for an Englishman, tho' using a multitude of short vowels in composition, does not know how to pronounce one alone, nor without a consonant after it, for want of having learnt my new two-columned horn-book

n, ō, nō [] n, ö, nö"

therefore I desire he would observe whether it would read amiss, if written as follows

"Thin-ote dispatcht rit-urns nom-ore eg-ain."
only taking particular care not to make

“ *pin*” of “ *sin*,” nor to change the “ *o*” of “ *nom*” into a short “ *aw*.”

READING LATIN.

In these exercises upon my mother-tongue I have not offered to make any alteration in our speech, but only to bring our writing conformable thereto, but in dealing with the Latin tongue we must go to work the contrary way, namely, by bringing ourselves to read in a manner conformable to the writing we see before us. Whether we do so or not I shall offer some reasons to doubt though it is with fear and trembling, for I must expect to have all our Latin scholars upon my back, who will quote Horace against me to prove that custom is the sole judge and arbitrary disposer in matters of language, and then proceed to alledge the custom of our Universities.

But

But I beg leave to observe that the lawful authority belongs only to the custom prevailing among those who are speaking their native language, and not to that fallen into by foreigners. What if the citizens of Paris call us all “ Mee Loards,” and we at London call them “ Mounseers,” does this become the true pronunciation of either language? The business then is to find out as well as we can, how the old Romans pronounced their Latin; and can we imagine they would endure to hear it repeated in the following manner, as commonly spoken by us,

*Armē virūmqui cēno Trodi quī p̄vīm̄s ab
ōris,*

Yitēliam fētō p̄awfiuḡs Lēvvinequi vīnīt,

Litōrē, multūm ilī et teris d̄jactētūs et alto

V̄i superūm sivi mem̄ōrem Djūnōnis aub vīras?

Virgil himself would not know his own works in this disguise, but mistake them for the production of some Scythian or Troglodite. And when we explained the thing

thing perhaps he might say, we have no such sounds as “ ar, vvi, dj, mvs” nor “ ab;” besides, says he, you have given me over measure in my first line, for there are five spondees, one iambus, and a supernumerary dactyle.

It is not possible to ascertain precisely in what manner the Romans founded their letters, but there is no shadow of evidence that they made them vary, or suffered them to occupy one anothers places, as the French do theirs, and we ours in a much greater degree; therefore we are certainly wrong in the words “ arma, musis, sedet,” where we give two different powers to the “ a,” the “ s” and the “ e.”

One cannot suppose otherwise than that our present Latin dialect took its rise upon the irruption of northern nations into the Roman provinces. When learning began to revive, the first sparks were stricken out among barbarians who mingled their

own brogue imbibed from the Gothic nurses with the ^{hither} Roman purity, which being brought over by their Monks, our own made a farther alteration from the brogue taught them by their Saxon nurses; so that our sovereign Lady Custom derives her title to despotic sway in lineal descent from the two mighty conqueresses nurse Gertruyde the Goth and nurse Ethelberga the Anglo-saxon.

We know the Romans had but five vowels, and though we pretend to own no more I have shown that we actually employ seven. Which two of them were not current in a Roman mouth I cannot tell, but guess they were “a” and “u.” “A” being now appropriated to the British islands, is most likely to have been of nurse Ethelberga’s introduction, yet I should be loath to part with it, as having a smoother and easier sound than most of the others, especially in its short quantity.

I am

I am inclined to believe “ *v* ” of much ancienter date, being none other than the Greek “ *upsilon*,” sometimes transported into Latin, and then ornamented with a tail, whereby it became a “ *y*.”

Their consonants will give some farther scope to criticism, there is no ground to imagine that “ *c* ” and “ *g* ” had not the same effect before all the vowels: their proper names written by a Greek historian cannot be read in our manner “ *Cicero, Gellius*;” nor were they so profuse of their ink as to write two letters where one would serve the purpose, as must be the case in “ *scena, scire, excellens, excipiens*.” if they spoke those words as we do. Then if they ever placed a “ *d* ” before their “ *g* ” agreeably to the modern fashion, Virgil was guilty of a false quantity in his

“ *Mens agitat molem, ——*”

and Horace in his

“ *Non eget Mauri, jaculis neque arcu.*”

“ *H* ” seems

"H" seems not to have been a distinct letter, but blended like the Greek aspirate with the subsequent vowel; to imitate this will prove the hardest task to the children of Ethelberga who are not accustomed to such a sound; if they did formerly practice it in "gh" and "ch" it has long since been totally disused.

It may justly be doubted whether "j" and "v" were known among them, those letters are not inserted in their alphabet, I have seen old editions of their works without them, and the proper names wherein they are now sometimes used, as "Jacobus" and "Virgilius" were written otherwise in Greek, "iacobos" and "ouirgilios," from whence may be gathered that the Romans only shortened the sound of their vowels "i" and "u" so as to make them the first letters of a diphthong and produce the same effect in speech as our common "y" and "w," pronouncing those words "Yacobus" and "Wirgilius." Upon

Upon this hypothesis we may comprehend the terror that seized the superstitious legions of Crassus, as Tully tells us, when upon marching down the High-street of Brundusium to embark for their Parthian expedition, they met a fellow crying Caunian figs, which they interpreted as an omen of bad success. The man it seems went along hallowing “Cauneas, Cauneas” which they took in their heads was “Cave ne eas.” Beware of going. But as we speak these Latin words, it is as unlikely they could mistake them for one another, as that an English brigade should fancy “Cauneas” to be “caution ye asses.” But if we suppose “au” pronounced as the Italians do, “v” to have the force of a “w,” and remember how our basket-women drawl out their vowels in crying “Spara---agraffs,” we shall presently perceive that “Cau---ue---ne---eas” gives exactly the same sound as “Cave ne eas.”

Their

Their having no “k” affords a strong presumption of their making “c” answer all the uses of it. “M” is the hardest to guess at of all, perhaps they performed it by gently closing the lips together in the middle, leaving a passage open on either side; it is remarkable there is no Greek word ending with “m.” There must have been something singular in the sound of “m,” which could oblige the Romans to say “mecum, tecum, secum, nobiscum, vobiscum,” because, as Cicero tells us, if the preposition as its very name seems to require, had been preposed before those pronouns, it would have been an offence against modesty: But if they had pronounced them in the manner we should have done, surely he must have had a very prurient ear who could find any thing indecent in the sound.

As they had no “zeta” it is impossible they should make “s” take the form of one, as we do in “propose,” sometimes
they

they introduced it from the Greek, and then wrote it “z,” as in “zephyrus;” nor is there any evidence of “t” assuming the form of “ſ” which we give it in “natio, mentio, patiens;” it was probably changed into “theta” in some words imported from Greece, as “Theatrum, Theoria;” and here Ethelberga proves a better mistress than Gertruyde by having taught her scholars to speak the spirate “theta” and the sonorous besides, supposed to have been unknown among the Greeks and Romans; “x” had always the force of “c” and “s,” therefore we speak it wrong in “Xerxes;” “z” was likewise a compound of “t” and “ſ,” so that “Gaza, Amazon” should be pronounced after the Italian manner “Gatsa, Amatſon.”

Nevertheless, the true sound of single letters is too uncertain a point for us who have no living master to instruct us, to ascertain

ascertain. I have thrown out my suggestions and shall pass on without attempting to disturb my good friends in making what chops and changes among them they please ; nor perhaps is it much matter whether we talk Latin by the same alphabet as Cicero or not ; we should understand one another equally well either way.

But quantity is a point of greater importance, by our neglect of that we spoil all the harmony of Latin verse, and our errors are inexcuseable because willful, for we have an infallible rule in the Latin poetry still extant among us, but the misfortune is that my countrymen are very hardly to be brought into any idea of quantity, which they perpetually confound with accent, probably led so to do by the notion of our English verse being iambic, where it must be owned the accented and the grave syllables frequently run alternate.

According

According to this way of reckoning, of the twelve first lines of the Rape of the Lock, ten are pure iambics, as likewise most of the lines in our English poetry will be found to be, and the rest to have a great majority of the iambi: the fewest I can recollect are in the first line of Milton,

“ Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit,” where I presume you will place but three accents upon “ man, be,” and “ fruit ;” yet our verse will admit of an additional syllable, which I think all the best readers do not suppress, and then it makes a dactyle “ from amo-” or an anapest “ -nii, elves” in the lines

“ What dire event from amorous causes
“ springs”
and

“ Fays, fairies, genii, elves and dæmons hear.” and one has three of these voluntaries in my way of speaking, yet is not the least harmonious of the poem,

“ The adventurous Baron the bright locks admierd.”

But

But quantity does not always depend upon accent, indeed the first vowel of a dissyllable often loses its length by losing its accent, as “*nocent, innocent* ;” “*you had a precedent in the precedent line* ;” and I believe it may be laid down for a general rule, the vowel next following after an accent is short, with an exception only of two entire words joined into one, as “*innholder, gunpowder, prizefighter, seafaring, bookbinder*.” Some of our accented vowels passing as quick thro the mouth as any other, as “*honour, resident, apothecary, laboratory*,” and multitudes of the like.

If a perverse adherence to rules can so bewitch the imagination as to make a short syllable long, let them have recourse to the Latin and consult their rule for the measure of “*virum, cano, Italianum*” and “*profugus*” in Virgil, and their favourite rule misleads them equally in making a short

short syllable long and a long one short.
How would Virgil fret at our reading

“*Nocte pluit tota, rēdeunt spectacula mane!*”

Horace was a merry fellow not easily put out of humour, so we could not make him fret, but he would laugh as heartily at hearing us repeat

“*Quem pēnēs arbitrium est, et jūs, et norma loquendi,*”

as we should do upon hearing any body say he had given three silver “pēnēs” for an orange, to make punch with the “jūs” of it. When people ask me how I would pronounce “redeunt;” upon my telling them, they cry out, why then you put two “d’s” and make it “reddeunt.” But pray how many “c’s” are there in “spectacula?” Why then do they read it in the same manner they must have done if it had been written “spectacula?”

In our language a double consonant is so far from making the syllable long that in general it produces the contrary effect, and the reason is plain, for having been taught, when children, constantly to place a long vowel after the consonant, but a short one before it, “*b, a, bā; a, b, āb*,” but never “*b, ā, bā; ā, b, āb*,” and needing farther instructions from our school-mistress for turning long syllables into short upon their junction in particular words, as “*b, ō, bō, d, ū, dū; bōdī*,” they are thereby led to shorten the vowel upon the consonant being doubled, because then we have one of two consonants to join with it in the same syllable; so that the doubling a letter will make a different word both in sound and sense only by shortning the preceding vowel.

“ The bear in “*fury*” rear’d his “*furry*” paws,
 He tore the “*fatted*” ox with “*fated*” jaws;
 The “*bitter*” “*biter*” thro’ the forest broke,
 And “*noted*” with his teeth the “*knotted*” oak.”

F

But

But we Anglo-latinists not having received the like instructions for joining from our masters, constantly make our dissyllables short or long according as they have or have not this double consonant, as in “malle, male; Varro, Varo; noscet, nocet.” Now I fancy I could remedy these and other defects if I might be permitted to part the syllables differently, or sometimes to transfer a letter from one word to another, as thus

“Arma^v ir-umque^c an-o Trojæ qui primus ab-oris,

I tal iam fato prof ug us Lavinæ u^v enit.”

Could we get a native Briton to read the above currently without dwelling immoderately upon the odd-looking syllables, I believe he would do it like Virgil himself; I do not say in his manner of pronouncing the vowels, but in the measure of the verses.

This way too I can distinguish words written alike, but varying in sense and measure,

measure, as “ma-ne, the morning, man-e, “ stay ; æ-quus, impartial, eq-uus, a horse ; “ ve-nis, veins, ven-is, you come ; po-pu-“ lus, a poplar tree, pop-ulus, people.” Why should we imagine Horace or Ovid did not know these words from one another when spoken singly, as well as we do “ halve” from “ have,” “ Psalm” from “ Sam” without standing to spell them ? But when we have repeated a Latin word, we often do not know how we have spoken it, whether quick or slow, till we turn to our *Gradus ad Parnassum* for information. Nor should we condemn this partition of syllables as uncouth, for we have many instances of the like in our own language, what ails us that we cannot say, “ val-et, “ lev-e, fit-i, hon-or, hum-or,” in Latin as readily as we do “ val-id, lev-y, cit-y, “ hon-our, hum-our,” in English, for so we always divide them in practice, and not as our nurses taught us in spelling “ va-lid, le-vy,” &c.

Where letters are doubled we commonly drop the latter of them, for we use no more of the “ t” in speaking “ pittance, “ fitting” than in “ pity, city ;” except when immediately preceding an accent, as “ illegal, irregular,” and that not always, for when there is another syllable intervening we return to our former course, as in “ illegality, irregularity.”

It seems extraordinary that we who are so sparing of the short “ o” in our own tongue, should place it in Latin words where it has no business, such as “ nos, “ vos, candidos.” What would you think of a man who upon finding his electuary a little candied by lying dry, should call it a “ candidos” of physic? And it would be found as odd to Horace on hearing us read “ candidos” in one of his odes. This evil, and that of other long vowels made short at the end of a word, may be cured by a final “ e” which we do not regard as a letter but a mark of elongation to the preceding

preceding vowel, writing “*vose, candi-*” “*dose, terrafe, orife, manuse*” for the genitive and plural. But then I must entreat my countrymen that they would not out of mere spite make two syllables of “*vose*” and the rest; let them turn “*s*” into “*z*” as they please as we do in “*propose*,” it will give me no disturbance, for I am solicitous only for the quantity.

In the syllable “*es*” we offend the contrary way, making it long where it is short, as in the “*quisquifes*” of Eneas when he met his mother in the disguise of a huntress, which we read like the word “*ease* :” this might be rectified by another “*s*,” and thus one may restore a line of Horace to its just measure in an English mouth,

“ *Mileſſ ait multo jam fractus membral-ab-ore.*”

ENGLISH HEXAMETER.

Our language is as capable of hexameter verse as the Greek or Latin, were we once

once familiarly acquainted with the several quantities of our syllables ; I have tried it in a translation of two extracts from Virgil containing his account of the Pythagorean doctrine, and to give my performance the fairer trial, I have accompanied it paragraph by paragraph with the original and two other translations by the same hand, one in blank verse and one in rhyme.

Tho I am not sure my heroics have fair play still, for the same hand may succeed less tolerably where it is a mere novice, than in a business it has been exercised in once or twice before ; so that they may fall inferior to their antagonists thro inexpertness of the versifier, rather than inharmonious nature of the verse, and to this particularly must be ascribed those cadences which very rarely find admittance in the Latin, such as

“ Preruptus, aquæ mons.”

or

“ Nascetur ridiculus mus.”

The

The reader will please to remember what I have said concerning double letters, and that I regard solely our manner of speaking, not of writing our language, or he will think me perpetually making false quantities. As a beginner may be allowed some indulgencies I have taken the liberty with most of our little particles, the vowel immediately preceding an accent, the final "y," and a long vowel followed by a word beginning with a vowel, to lengthen or shorten them as best suits my convenience; and to cut off the "d" at the tail of "and" when I find it standing in my way, because I observe people every day crying "man an' wife, parson an' clerk, one an' all."

But since we vary among ourselves in the measure of our syllables, whoever means to examine me with candour will conform himself to my marks, tho perhaps he would have placed them otherwise. Nor need he be surprised to see me marking

marking differently from what I did in the specimen. Prosodists distinguish between the natural measure of a vowel and that it acquires by position, which latter governs the measure of a syllable; now it was my busines in the specimen to ascertain the natural quantity of the vowels, here my concern lies with feet and syllables, thus for instance "earth" is marked long and "sky" short in my first hexameter, because made so by position, but had I been to mark the first blank line "sky" would have had a tittle to denote the length of "y," and "earth" none because "e" (for we drop "a") is short by nature.

Perhaps I have transgressed once in placing "agitations" at the end of a line after having declared "g" a double letter, which must make the preceding vowel long by position, but we are so used to that kind of measure in reading Latin verse, that I dare say nobody would have

hit

hit the blot if I had not pointed it out. Exception may be taken against “their “heaven” in the 8th hexameter being made a dactyle; to cure this defect you need only write the last syllable with an apostrophe instead of the “e,” and then tho you still will speak it just as before, your compliant imagination will turn the spurious dactyle into a legitimate spondee.

Ex ENEIDE, lib. vi.

1. Principio cœlum, ac terras, camposque
liquentes,

Lucentemque globum lunæ, Titaniaque astra
Spiritus intus alit; totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

2. ā sp̄ir̄it̄ īnt̄ernāl p̄en̄etr̄at̄es thr̄ō eārth̄, sk̄y
ānd oceān,

Moūnts tō thē moōn's lūcid ūrb, ānd stārs ī
cōuntlēss ābūndānce,

Onē soūl āll māttēr īnvīgorātes, gīves līfe tō thē
systēm,

Oēr eāch pārtīcūlār mēmbēr dīffūsēs ālērtnēss.

3. An active spirit runs thro earth, sky, ocean
 The moon reflexive, self-illumin'd stars,
 One universal soul pervading fills
 The whole of matter; animates the mass,
 O'er the vast body and each limb diffus'd.

4. A spirit flows thro ocean, earth and air
 Spreads to the moon and fills the starry sphere,
 Of nature's body, this the mighty soul
 Sustains the parts and animates the whole.

1. *Inde hominum, pecudumque genus, vitæque volantum*
Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub æquore
pontus.

2. *Thence men and all animals sprang forth,*
beasts and feathered fowl
and whatever monsters swarm thro the watery
kingdoms.

3. From thence imparted, beasts and reasoning
 men,
 And air-borne birds, and what enormous shapes
 The sea beneath his glassy surface holds,
 Their sentient principle of life receive.

4. Thence

4. Thence man derives his spark of vital
flame,

Thence all four-footed tribes of wild or tame,
And birds that soar aloft, and things that
creep,
And all the monsters of the boisterous deep.

1. Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo
Seminibus: quantum non noxia corpora tar-
dant,

Terrenique hebetant artus, moribundaque mem-
bra.

2. à vigōr of piērcīng firē all thēse seēds cārry
dōwn frōm
Theīr heāvenlȳ örīgīn, būt dāmpēd and all dīm-
mēd övēr .

With clōse envēlopīngs of grōss māttēr, and pē-
rīshīng līmbs.

3. These seeds of heavenly origin possēs
Inherent, an actīvity of fire ;
Unless so far as clogg'd, benumb'd and darken'd
With loads of lumpish flesh, unwieldy limbs,
And clay built bodies hastening to corrup-
tion.

4. These

4. These sparks of source divine might well
inspire

The mental powers of pure ethereal fire,
But more or less opprest with loads they lie
Of cumbrous flesh, and bodies form'd to die.

1. Hinc metuunt, cupiuntque, dolent, gau-
dentque, nec auras

Respiunt; clausæ tenebris, et carcere cæco.

2. Hēnce āppetītes, jeāloūsiēs sōrrōw ānd trāns-
pōrt; nōr ā pōspēct

ōf theīr nātīve ābōde ēver īntō thē dārk pŕisōn
ēntērs.

3. Hence cravings, frights, alternate joys and
sorrows,

No glimpse can reach them of their native hea-
vens,

While thus in close and darksom durance pent.

4. Hence joys and hopes and fond desires take
place,

Fear, hatred, anger drive their furious race,
Impulse bears sway, and passions of all kinds
Debase and darken the embodied minds.

No thought can reach them of their high descent
While thus in close and darksom durance pent.

I. Quin,

1. *Quin, et supremo cum lumine vita reliquit,
Non tamen omne malum miseris, nec funditus
omnes*

*Corporeæ excedunt pestes: penitusque necesse
est*

Multa diu concreta modis inolescere miris.

2. *Nōr dō thē lāte loōsnēd prisōnērs on līfes
dīfīlūtīon*

*obtaīn dēlivērānce frōm th' ills thēy lāboūrēd
ūndēr,*

*Nōr whöllÿ dīschārge thē vēnōm of grōss flēshlÿ
cōrrūptīon,*

*Fōr theīr lōng rēfīdēnce ī dēnse ēlēmēntāry
mānsiōns*

*Wōrks strānge dēfīlēmēnts ī thē fōft ēthērēäl ī-
māte.*

3. *Nor yet when death's delivering hand
unbars*

*The prison, do the wretches find relief
From all their plagues, nor every taint expel
Of carnal venom; for their long abode
In seats impure must needs have worked deep
Strange foul concretions in their tender sub-
stance.*

4. *Yet*

4. Yet when expiring life dissolves the clay,
The prisoners frees, and breaks their bonds
away,

The wretches do not full deliverance gain ;
Still of the carnal part some dregs remain ;
From length of union copious stains are thrown,
And deep, and hard the gross concretions
grown.

1. Ergo excentur pœnis, veterumque ma-
lorum

Supplicia expendunt. Aliæ panduntur inanes
Suspensæ ad ventos : aliis sub gurgite vasto
Invectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.

2. Henc pénal sufférings bēcōme rēquisitē,
wēll ädaptēd
Tō différēnt vīcēs ; sōme strēcht i'thē wīnds tō
bē sweetnēd ;
Sōme plūng'd intō rāpid wāters tō cleānse them
of ordūres ;
or clārifīed frōm drōss bȳ scōrching flāmes
ägitātōns.

3. Purgation

3. Purgation hence by various punishments
 Grows needful, suited to the various stains
 Of vice: some hang to sweeten in the winds;
 From some the gushing torrents wash
 Their filth, or the red iron burns their gangrene
 out.

4. For this they need the painful exercise
 Of sufferings meet for crimes of various dyes.
 Some whirl'd in eddies of tempestuous wind,
 Some plung'd in torrents, some in fire refin'd.

1. *Quisque suos patimur manes: exinde per amplum*

Mittimur Elysium, et pauci læta arva tenemus:
Donec longa dies, perfecto temporis orbe
Concretam exemit labem: purumque reliquit
Æthereum sensum, atque auraï simplicis ignem.

2. *Sūch as on eārth strōve hārd tō rēsist cōr-pōrēl īmpūlse,*

ānd wōrkt ūnweāriēd īn a cōnstānt cōurse of
āmēndmēnt,
ā bānd nōt nūmērōūs, least neēdīng pūrifīcātōn,
Hēre dwēll ī elysiūm with this pūre air tō bē
sweētnēd.

All shall have allotted us our due share of discipline,
 Till these concretions be dissolved in long process
 Of time,
 The spiritual body be replaced in its primitive form,
 And spark celestial wholly be from gross matter exempt.

3. Yet those there are, how few alas! whose lives
 Religious in the paths of virtue led,
 Have kept them clear from gross habitual sin;
 To these elysium's blessed clime assign'd
 Serves to evaporate what stains of guilt
 Frail mortal nature fixes on the best.
 Our several share of discipline awaits
 Us all, till rolling years have worn away
 Each hard concreted spot, and purg'd the soul
 From every foreign mixture, and restor'd
 Their quickness to the etherial faculties.

4. The virtuous few 'gainst passion wont to strive,
 And hear the voice of conscience whilst alive,
 Who fewest spots of stain from earth have brought,
 And of foul body least contagion caught;

Here

Here in Elysium take their happy seats,
Whose cordial air their growing health com-
pleats.

Our suited discipline we all endure,
Till time that workt the ailments, works the
cure.

Till each concreted spot be worn away,
The soul well cleans'd from every dust of clay ;
The spark ethereal in full freedom rise
To re-affert its native faculties.

1. *Has omnes, ubi mille rotam volvere per
annos,*

*Lethæum ad fluvium Deus evocat agmine magno :
Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant,
Rursus & incipiant in corpora velle reverti.*

2. *Thōse thāt äppēar yōndēr, hävīng eāch hīs
cēntūry tēn tīmes
Cōpleatēd, drīvēn ôn bȳ fōrce dīvīne, iñ
äbūndānce*

*Flock tō thē fōrgētſūl Lēthē; tō rēmōve whāt
ävērsenēs
Elſē thēy mīght häve ägaīnst thē rēturn ūpon
eārth tō a nēw līfe.*

3. Yon troop, a crowded throng, o'er whom
 the year
 His wheel a thousand times has twirl'd, some
 god
 Drives down, to drench them in the torpid flood
 Of Lethe; whose oblivious wave shall wash
 All former traces clean from their remembrance.
 Then they without reluctance will return
 To sordid earth, and willingly endure
 Another journey thro the toils of life.

4. Yon company on whom the lots were cast,
 As o'er their heads a thousand years had past
 The God drives down in troops on Lethe's shore,
 To wash from memory all her ancient store;
 Then unreluctant they return to earth,
 And in fresh bodies take a second birth.

Ex GEORGICIS, lib. iv.

1. *Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et
 haustus*
*Ætherios dixerat: deum namque ire per omnes
 Terrasque, tractusque maris cœlumque pro-
 fundum.*

2. *Therc*

2. There are who have averr'd of that sagacious insect

The honey bee, that a spark of the divine spirit
in him

Lies resident, drawn from the vast ethereal ocean.
For Gods intelligent substance all things penetrating,

Fills earth and waters, and heavens supreme lucid orbit.

3. Some hold the bee has drank his draught
of ether,

And of the mind divine his portion shar'd.

Thro earth, say they, the Deity pervades,
The spacious seas, and spheres immense of heaven.

4. Some argue from the well-knit polity
And curious structure of the industrious bee,
That these small folk have sipt th' ethereal stream,
And drawn their pittance from the mind supreme.
A spirit eternal, they maintain, extends
O'er earth, and seas, and heaven's remotest ends.

1. Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne
ferarum,

Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas.
Seilicet hoc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri

Omnia : nec morti esse locum ; sed viva volare
Sideris in numerum, atque alto succedere cœlo.

2. Frōm this, as a fountāin, flockes, herds,
men and all animal kinds,
Draw their percipient souls on their first breath,
and all here
The body dissolving refund them again with the
last gāsp.
Thus death has not a place in nature, but high
in æther
Th' unperishing soul mounts up amid the bright
stellär armes.

3. From his pure substance flocks, and herds,
and men
And all the salvage tribes, each on their birth
The vivifying subtle spark receives,
That lives, and moves, and actuates all their
limbs.
Thither returns on death absorb'd and mingled
In the same heavenly source whence first it issued.
Thus nothing dies but what once liv'd on earth
Lives still aloft amid the starry host
Ranging at large the vast ethereal sky.

4. From hence deriv'd descends the vital
flame,

That actuates man, and beasts of every name,
Thither returns on death, in liquid sky
Absorb'd. The creature only seems to die.
What liv'd in body, not extinct, nor lost,
Mounts still alive to the sidereal host.

I dont know how my hexameters might succeed abroad, but within the little circle of my private acquaintance they are regarded as curiosities rather than beauties, hanging a peg lower than the two other translations. Indeed it may be doubted whether the Latin measure can ever come into vogue among us or our neighbours the French, for we are all so used to expect harmony from accent and rhyme that we cannot easily find it in any other source. Besides our peculiarities of pronunciation are so various that a man can never work his verses so exactly as that another shall not make false quantities in them by his different manner of reading.

But

But these difficulties do not stand much in my way, for I am not endeavouring to introduce a custom of throwing all our English poetry into the Latin measures: but if a man has a mind to exercise his ingenuity that way once or twice in his life he may find some use in the foregoing observations: to which I shall add, that he must not depend altogether upon quantity, nor be totally regardless of accent, nor take greater liberties than the Latin poets have done: wherein I must confess myself faulty in ending a line with

“ — from gross matter exempt.”

Yet our language will admit of more final monosyllables provided they be not accented themselves, but follow next after an accent: for I think “ so great a regard for,” “ nicely to form them,” “ can write a receipt well,” no inharmonious cadences. And I wish him to lay aside that scholastic error of “ h” being no

letter

letter; I know in some words we drop it, as "honour, honesty," but wherever sounded in the mouth it is as much a letter as any in the alphabet, as appears by our constantly using the particle "a" rather than "an" before it, unless when the syllable having an "h" is immediately followed by an accent, for if another syllable intervene it resumes its former claim to the dignity of a letter. I know none other reason for this exception than custom and the approbation of mine own ear, both of which I think would guide me to speak and write the following sentence thus, "a habit of drinking will bring on an habitual thirst, and make your house a habitation of drunkards."

But besides mere curiosity, a little exercise in the heroic, elegiac, and lyric measures might render the idea of quantity more familiar to us, and enable us to

to read the Latin poets without losing any thing in the harmony of their verse; nor would it be useless in conversing with the classical prose writers. As for Pliny the elder, or my good friend in the vehicular state, Aulus Gellius, tis no great matter how we read them so we understand their meaning, for they only aimed at informing our understandings or gratifying our curiosity, not at pleasing our ear or touching our affections; but the orators and historians of the Augustan age laid as much stress upon their language as their matter, esteeming it a necessary feather to wing the arrow which would not pierce without it.

Tully appears to have been more solicitous than the rest upon that article, he has given us rules for the neat structure of the phrase, the apt composition of words, and harmonious cadence of the periods, and tells us it was by these he drew

accla-

acclamations from his audience. Perhaps he might carry them farther than necessary, but when we take an author in hand, it is our business to enter into all his spirit and all his views, and then we may use our moderation in striving to imitate him so far only as we shall find expedient, and without a ready idea of quantity it will not be possible to observe how Tully applies his own rules, nor what effect they take upon the ear.

Nor would it do any hurt to our own language if we were to pay a due share of regard to those rules : some attention to quantity and accent would help to polish our compositions and throw them into real periods ; for tis not every long string of words lying between one full stop and another that deserves that name. Cicero in one of his treatises on rhetoric furnishes us with samples of periods consisting of few words, which are made periods by a certain

certain rhetorical measure, corresponding in all its parts like the several airs of a tune, and lying half way between the music of poetry and the plain language of family discourse.

If we could attain this degree of harmony it would add more to the dignity of our style than any rumbling pomp of words, peculiar terms of science, or exotics exported from Greece and Rome. Not but that I own myself fond of accumulating polysyllables where they can be introduced naturally and without appearing to be hunted for, because our language suffers for want of having more of them amongst us, and we diminish the number daily by our unlucky propensity to abbreviation.

The following of vowel after vowel is counted distasteful, wherefore we change the particle "a" into "an," and I wish

we

we could copy Swift in using "mine" instead of "my" upon the like occasions; and if we would agree to turn "no" into "none" it would do us no harm. An over-scrupulousness upon this head might subject us to great inconveniences, perhaps it were enough to avoid a frequent succession of similar vowels, but then to know which are such, we must consider their sound in the mouth rather than their look upon paper; by this trial you will find "no oaths," "the ear," "my eye" to be similar, but "no oxen," "the egg," "my ink" not so.

The harsh collision of consonants, and crowded accents is another rock of offence to be guarded against, especially as the danger is increased by the multitude of monosyllables in our language, by many of our words being accented at the end, as "regard, command, displace," and by our humour of abbreviating before-mentioned



tioned, which often jams a number of consonants into one rugged clump, and draws the accents into contact, as appears in "stretcht canvas," "he has broke sticks;" which dissonance might be escaped if we would say "stretched canvas," "he has broken sticks."

The sweetest cadence seems to be that of the dactyle and spondee, but this being pre-occupied by the poets could not find admittance into plain prose: yet the cadences principally recommended by Cicero vary from it only by the subtraction or addition of one short syllable just to spoil the dactyle. Thus the old word "indu-
"perator" might end a line of Ennius, and "imperator" would satisfy Cicero at the end of a period; "esse videtur" may come in properly to close a verse, and "esse videatur" was his favourite close; insomuch that Rollin tells us a multitude

of passages may be collected from his works terminating with those two words,

But English hexameters being never likely to become familiar in our ears, we need not scruple to conclude with a direct dactyle and spondee, so that my faulty close “from gross matter exempt” might be defensible in prose; unless from the transposition of the words, which would run more naturally “exempt from “gross matter;” but I think the following hexameter would not sound unperiodic,

“ *Fraīltīes frōm whīch nō mān ḥn eārth ī tōfālly ēxēmpt;*”

and the better perhaps for the accent falling upon the last syllable, for the art of periodic measure consists, I apprehend, in approaching as near as possible, without falling into direct verse or any thing carrying the air of a scrap of poetry; therefore rhyme is most carefully to be avoided

in our language, because that is the
strangest feature in our versification.

A man would be highly censured who should begin a letter upon the subject of astronomy thus, "Sir, you must not impute it to me as a crime that I have delay'd your orders so long a time for I have been too deeply immersed in bricks and lime to contemplate that ethereal sublime where I know you so frequently climb : but now I feel my thoughts more at leisure, they rise spontaneously with great pleasure to that glorious flaming treasure where all is disposed in number, weight and measure."

A number of iambi likewise running on in a train without any dactyle or anapest between, or transposition of words out of their natural order, will give your phrase the countenance of poetry. But

a verse

a verse may be brought to lay aside its offensive glare with a very little alteration: “a doubt these illustrations seem to clear” is downright poetry, add one little syllable and it becomes admissible among the sober prosaic numbers, “a doubt these “illustrations may seem to clear.”

But a few lines of poetical measure do no harm, provided they are so intermingled among the prose as that a current reader, who does not stand still to look for them, shall not perceive them; and I believe such might be extracted from most of our prose compositions. Rollin has found a line and a half in Livy,

“ *Hæc ubi dicta dedit, stringit gladium; cu-
neoque* ”

“ *Facto, per medios ruit hostes —.* ”

when writing my chapter on understanding and imagination I found something particularly touch my fancy in one place of the first section; I wondered at the cause

cause, as perceiving nothing extraordinary either in the thoughts or diction, till at length I discovered that the passage ended with a true hexameter in my own manner of reading, which inclines me to drop the consonants rather than the vowels,

“ Thēy coū’d hä’ dōne i’thē rāpiditȳ of their
nātūrāl coūrse.”

and I have since discovered two verses in the first section of Freewill, one a hexameter, not indeed mightily well turned, the other an English iambic;

“ Sa —

“ - gēs tō bēhōld thē wōndērs of thē vēhicūlāt
“ state.”

“ And boundless glories of the mundane Soul.”

But tho’ verses may be pardonable in prose when purely accidental they ought never to be introduced on purpose, for they willl betray themselves to the reader and be disgusting. Yet that there is a certain measure to be observed, not con-

flicting

sisting in a precise number of feet, seems agreed by all who have touched on the subject. Therefore I would not exhort a man to be continually scanning feet and quantities in his prose compositions, nor need he even in his poetry after a competent practice, for his ear will guide him sufficiently in both, but then he must have brought his ear by the exercise of rules into a train of judging right: as when we go to the dancing master for an easy motion of our limbs we take pains to imitate his affectations, yet without intending to practise them afterwards in common converse. For surely there is a medium between the mince of a dancing master and the slouch of a clown, and this constitutes the graceful carriage and easy motions of a gentleman; it requires pains and industry to raise us from the slouch, but the recoil of nature will bring us down from the mince without any trouble.

A little exercise in poetry and variety of measures may be called learning to dance in language, and will enable us when we come out of the muses dancing school to slide readily into the graceful harmony and easy flow of vowels in composition. Variety is what principally distinguishes a period from a verse ; Cicero himself would have scrupled to end always with his two favourite cadences. Therefore the monotony of our iambic rhyme where almost every line is an entire sentence constructed upon the same scale, tho the sweetest measure for a copy of verses, grows tiresome in a long work. I have read three or four pages in Pope's Homer with great delight, but always found myself cloyed before I could get to the end of a book ; for tho I love a bit or two of sweetmeats as well as most folks, I should think it a grievous punishment to have nothing else to dine upon.

Some

Some persons indeed acquire a smoothness and roundness of expression merely by corresponding or conversing with good company, and get the knack of turning periods without knowing it, but this is an advantage that does not fall to every body's lot, and they can only supply it by proper attention to rules. It is admitted that example is more prevalent than precept, yet where the former is not to be had we may serve our purpose well enough with the latter with a little more trouble; both united together are most desirable, for precept will help us to profit better and quicker by example.

Some apprehend that a regard to language will draw them off from attending to their matter: if this be the case it must happen thro their own negligence; for I would have them prepare their matter first, and afterwards proceed to turn and polish it, until they have gradually

attained a readiness of doing both together. Undoubtedly sense is more deserving our attention than sound, yet the latter may claim a considerable share for sake of the former, both as giving an additional weight to it in the ear, and aiding the birth of it in the mind. For there is so intimate a connection between language and ideas, and we so commonly use ourselves to think in words, that a habit of smooth and flowing utterance must give a quicker and smoother current to our meditations.

It has been commonly held that a clear conception produces clear expression; but I question much whether this will always hold good; I have found it otherwise in my own experience, particularly on the subject of Freewill, whereon tho I seem to myself to be perfectly clear, I could never yet explain mine ideas to another. And among the country fellow .

whcm

whom I have had under examination, clearness of expression is much scarcer than that of knowledge ; they know their own story to a tittle, and the fields they daily work in, yet it is sometimes an hour's work to get the right state of the case out of them, or an exact scite of the grounds.

Perhaps it may be truer that clearness of expression become habitual will produce similar clearness in our conception, so that tho the study of language does not encrease our knowledge, we smooth the road thereby towards making farther improvements,

Then with respect to its effect upon the hearer, this seems to be too much disregarded by your easy writers, that is, such as aim only at what any body can easily write : the use of speech, say they, is only to express our thoughts, why then need

need we trouble ourselves about the choice and structure of words while we can find such as contain our meaning? But this is a surly and churlish way of talking, shewing a contempt of mankind, solicitous only to save trouble to themselves, not caring how much they put other people to; for tho they may find it easier to spit out their thoughts in any rugged manner that first presents itself, certainly a decent and harmonious language will make them more easily comprehended by the hearer; without this they will carry the mysteriousness of an oracle, costing more pains to interpret than they have a right to expect from him.

It may be alledged against me that I do not practise mine own doctrine, but I am no master of the art, nor is it an uncommon thing for people to give better advice than they can follow. I flatter myself that some periodic passages may

be

be found in my performances, for I stand upon the watch to catch them whenever suggested by the muse, yet without ever going out of my way to hunt after them, as esteeming substance preferable to sound; and sometimes having hit upon a period if something farther occurs material, I tag it on in a tail.

“ Which like a wounded snake drags its slow
“ length along.”

I should proceed next to antitheses, similar beginnings, similar closes, repetitions, contrasts, and all that Tully calls figures of language; in contradistinction to figures of thought, but this is too much for me to undertake, since being disabled from consulting my books and reduced to depend altogether on the stores deposited in my memory. I remember he asserts that these figures alone will harmonize the stile without aid of feet or measures; antithesis seems the principal, as being the most striking

striking, and therefore the most beautiful when sparingly used, for if repeated often it nauseates presently. I have been almost sick with reading the funeral orations of **Flechier**, for they present you with nothing but a continued string of antitheses, each of them charming in itself, but they overpower you with numbers.

Some express an utter contempt of all figures, because a florid style, say they, so covers what substance may lie beneath that one cannot reach it thro the glare of ornament. I am ready to allow the mischievousness of high colours and glaring ornaments, but presume a florid style is not that abounding most with figures, but where they are all of the same sort, which then will force themselves upon the notice and engross it from every thing else.

He

He that is expert in all kinds can work multitudes of them in great varieties into his texture imperceptibly: the reader feels something please him, and does not know from what particular source; he thinks it arises from the matter, which therefore he pursues with keener appetite and greater profit; like the salt mixed in our bread, which we do not taste but makes it go down and nourish the better. The highest perfection of art lies in concealing your art.

USES OF REFORMED ALPHABET.

Some perhaps will charge me with wandering from my subject by entering into the consideration of verses, periods and measures at all, but they may please to reflect that paragraphs are composed of sentences, sentences of words, and words of letters, so that the largest textures of language are but more compounded vocal sounds,

sounds, and I am not out of my road whilst seeking what might give them a more harmonious flow.

My having travelled thus far may show that tho I seemed to set out in the land of Trifles, it was not upon a jaunt of mere amusement, but conducts to what might prove of some use to such as are desirous of improving their language, and not satisfied with barely discharging their thoughts from their own mouths, wish to convey them safely into the mind of another ; but this cannot be done, or not so completely done, without a familiarity with quantities and measures.

An Englishman's acquaintance lies solely among accents and rhimes, the latter whereof he cannot employ in prose ; he does not know when a vowel is long or short, whether he pronounces " a " or " e," " o " or " au," nor distinguishes " eu " from " u," nor sometimes see the difference

difference between vowel and consonant unless you spell it for him "ewe" or "you;" he is ready to swear the first syllable of "uncle" is formed of the two sounds "eu" and "n," but if he hears you speak it "euncle" he will be severely merry upon you, yet you may say "ungcl" without offence, so you do not write it in that manner, he will think you employed just the same letters as he does himself. All this must be imputed to that confusedness and uncertainty in the connection between sounds and characters taught us with the first rudiments of our language by the school-mistress, and afterwards confirmed by the school-master, so that our vowels change their nature according as they come after or before a consonant, and the syllables change again in all arbitrary variations upon their junction into words; nay sometimes when turned into words, for you are not taught to speak the particle "to" in the same

fame manner as you were taught to spell the syllable "to" in your horn-book.

There is no appearance that the ancients ever gave different powers to their vowels, therefore they could at any time express their provincial, or faulty pronounciations only by the change of a vowel, as in "quom" for "quum," "voster" for "vester," "aurai" for "auræ;" whereas we can mark peculiarities that way sometimes, but not always; I can tell that "oats" are called "wuts" by the farmers in my neighbourhood by writing, but cannot tell how they pronounce the verb "draw" unless by word of mouth. I can explain how the ladies speak "none" by writing it "nun," but I cannot describe by writing in what manner I speak it myself, because if I leave out the "e" you will change my "o" into quite another vowel. And probably the Romans taught their children to repeat the vowels both

long

long and short on their first learning to name them, whence they became so ready at discerning measures that the whole pit and galleries would raise an outcry upon hearing a single false quantity come from the stage, tho to us there appears such an irregularity in the iambics of Terence that our learned men confess they cannot reduce them to any certain standard.

Besides how would the babes of Greece be made to distinguish “ε” from “η,” or “ο” from “ω,” or to spell “τε, τη, το, τω,” if taught like ours to name all their vowels long.

In our own language I believe our ancestors endeavoured to write as they talked, as may be gathered from old manuscripts varying successively in every age, and sometimes different persons used different ways in the same age; but since reading has become more general we scrupu-

ple to depart a tittle from that, to escape the shame of being counted illiterate. So far as this brings us all into uniformity by following a general standard it is very well, but why the standard of writing should not follow the general standard of speaking I see no reason, unless where it may chance to bring us back to the better sound, as in "dragged" rather than "drag'd," "bursten" rather than "burst."

But why need we to persist obstinately to write in a manner that nobody speaks and yet does not make our diction more sonorous? To instance in the word "apron," ladies and gentlemen, chambermaids and footmen all unanimously call it "apern;" you cannot plead antiquity here for in Cranmer's edition of the Bible you will find mention of Adam's sewing fig-leaves to make "aperns;" nor will the old pretence to etymology avail you, for you remove it farther from its

its primitive source the French word, “*epargne*,” which denotes something to spare, or save the petticoats from dirt.

Thus all things considered I cannot but think it would have been better if children had been taught their spelling by the horn-book corrected in the manner I have recommended in the former part of this little dissertation ; their progress would have been easier and consequently quicker, for being once perfected in connecting their simple sounds with single characters, they would have fallen presently into the comprehension of their united force when formed into compounds, without the additional task of learning their changes in syllables, and the farther changes of syllables in words, and being puzzled with characters that are utterly superfluous, as in “*high*, “*taught*, *phlegm*, *solemn*,” or do not perform the office of letters, but serve only

only as marks to direct the force of other letters, as in "made, hear, wear, half."

They would be able to read any word they had never seen before upon being informed of the accent, and consequently when advanced in learning would find no difficulty in reading their Latin, and enter readily into the ideas of measure and harmony. Add farther that the several country pronounciations might be drawn together under one common standard, by learning the same spelling book composed of unfluctuating characters, and the same vocabularies properly accented and with tittles to point out the long vowels. There would be fewer errors in orthography among the lower sort, for their ear would guide their hand, so that they would never write wrong unless they spoke wrong, and we should not be perplexed so frequently in examining the accompts of our servants and petty tradesmen, and when they mis-

call

call any thing it might be corrected once for all by making them write it down; we may presume no such inconveniences happened among the Romans, for else we might have expected to see some notice taken of them in Plautus, as there is now and then in our plays and farces.

Now a desire to have our new method introduced at once, would carry the air of a romantic wish rather than a serious proposal, nor am I unapprised of the difficulties and confusion it must involve us in. Were all Schoolmasters from henceforward to proceed upon my alphabet, the upper classes must all go down again to the bottom and begin afresh to learn their mother tongue, or else there could be little intercourse between them and the new-comers for want of being able to read their books, and both would triumph over one another for their oddities and barbarisms. As they grew up we must

I

have

have new editions of all our books, for they would not know what to make of any now extant; tho they might discourse well enough with the rest of the world they could not hold an epistolary correspondence, because neither side would understand a word of all he saw upon the paper before him.

But all sudden revolutions as well in literature as in church and state, are accompanied with some mischiefs, wherefore it is better to proceed gradually and administer the remedies in proportion as the patient can bear them. I observe some amendments daily made in our orthography tending to bring it nearer towards a real orthography from an anomography that it was before. " Surgeon, " rhime, solemnize" are as currently received among us now, as ever " Chirur- " geon, rhythm, solemnize" were formerly; such alterations introduced sparingly

ingly do not hinder the reader's speed, for the context explains them in a twinkle: books of general use will have new editions wherein they will conform to the successive changes, nor will this render old authors unintelligible, for we can still make a shift to read Chaucer notwithstanding the remoteness of his spelling from our own; it must tickle our vanity to see how stupidly profuse our forefathers were of their ink, and how much cleverer we can manage ourselves, for why should they give themselves double trouble in writing "high" when "hi" will do as well?

Our young gentlemen are commonly fond enough of introducing novelties, scarce any but has some little peculiarity in his orthography; if it is too early to produce a work, he may still produce a word, and this gives no small self-satisfaction as exhibiting marks of an enterprizing

ing genius ; might it not then answer his purpose better if his novelties were such as could have good and substantial reasons to support them and enable him to stem the torrent of custom. Unless perhaps he thinks it a derogation from English liberty to avail himself of reasons at all, for since the fashionable doctrine that volition being influenced by motives infers a fatality, one can never manifest one's freedom so clearly as by acting whimsically and doing things for which no man alive can guess the motive.

But I hope there are many who think it no impeachment of their free-will to regulate their measures by discretion and judgement, such will take it kindly that I have pointed out a method of innovation, or rather of reformation, and suggested topics whereby they may hold a good argument in behalf of them, and upon the assistance

assistance of such I found my principal expectations of success.

If they shall honour me with their alliance, I recommend to them in the first place to make themselves familiarly acquainted with what I call my horn-book, five minutes bestowed upon it every day for a fortnight running will serve them better than seventy minutes at a sitting; for in cases of this sort where expertness is needful rather than science, repetition will do the work easily that close application could not effect with labour: and when become perfect masters herein, so that they can speak the vowels long and short, either single or with a consonant currently, they may then use their skill in what manner and to what extent they judge convenient or practicable.

If they shall find occasion to take the title from "i" in order to employ it for

distinguishing long vowels from short, and should find the “ i ” confounded thereby with another “ i ” or “ u ” lying close to it, they need only place their tittle as a mark of separation between the two letters. I shall produce a Latin example because I cannot frame one so fully to my purpose in English, “ *Pi*ris *fil*i*s* *di**r*i *funt* pro-
“ *p*it*i* neque *ull*i *ci**tr*us aut *prop*in*qui*us
“ *ad*funt.” Where you see the “ *uiu* ” in “ *propinqui*us ” might be taken for “ *iuu* ” or “ *iiui* ” or “ *uui* ” without some such expedient; but these intercof-
tal dots are wanting only in manuscript, for the Printers do not tye the letters to-
gether with with the hair strokes of join-
hand.

One remark I will add more, that since I have rejected the use of “ *favor* ” and “ *humor* ” as not answering the manner in which those words are almost universally spoken, and since the sounds of short
“ *er* ”

“er” and “ur” when not accented are so near that you must listen with both ears to distinguish them apart, it might be better to write “faver, humer” than “favur, humur” which I own myself have not a pretty aspect upon paper.

For CORRECTING vicious PRONOUN-
CIATION.

But whatever success with the generality may attend my abettors, (for surely I stand as good a chance of having some as Rosy-crucius, Berkeley, our modern Pyrrhonians and other schemers) a ready knowledge of the corrected alphabet might avail to several purposes tho in the hands only of a few. They might describe the variations in different counties, the Suffolk man’s “dai” for “de” and “nu tu” “go” for “nu it goz;” the Yorkshire man’s “nu” for “iu” and “saudjer” for “sodjer;” the Lancashire “buc.” for “buc;” the Devonshire “mves edruud”

for “ mud drvied,” that is, “ dust ; ” the Surry “ dra ” for “ draw ; ” the Oxford “ Märtenz ” for “ Mertn ; ” the schoolboy’s “ scruidjd ” for “ crvüded ; ” and thus they might improve their pronunciation at a distance by corresponding with one another, for your friend would read your letter in just the same sounds as you would have delivered the contents by word of mouth, whereas now it is possible that two persons in very distant parts might correspond together currently and yet when they met might not be able to understand each other in discourse,

We have experience of the like in the Roman classic authors, which are extant in all the nations of Europe, and all nations on opening them think they have the same thing before their eyes, yet if they were severally to hear them read by one another they would hardly understand a word of them, for “ natio, Cicero ” are by the Italians called “ nautsio, Tñtiero,” by the

the French “ *nawſio, Sifero*” and by us “ *nēſio, Sifero* ; most probably wrong by all three, for that they ought to be read “ *nawtio, Cicero*,” according to the powers of those letters in the reformed alphabet.

Now if Foreigners could be brought into the idea of annexing always the same sounds to the same characters, and observing quantity in the pronunciation of their vowels, it might tend to shorten disputes ; dissertations on those matters and upon language, harmony, poetical and periodic measures might become mutually more intelligible and more profitable, the united labours of learned men might ascertain the true powers of the Roman letters and possibly bring us all to join in the same way of reading our Latin.

METHOD OF INTRODUCING REFORMED
ALPHABET.

As I have already declared against all sudden and violent changes, if the matter be judged important enough to attempt an alteration by gentle steps, they may be tried by providing vocabularies ranged in columns of words, in the vulgar anomalous, and the steady consistent spelling, so that every word in each character may stand side by side over against one another, as

“hair, hér. therefore, ðérfor.
keep, cip. fortitude, fawrtitiud.
many, meni. philosophy, filawsofi.
thinking, þingin. complication, cawmplicéfion.”

Any person who should take a fancy to bring himself acquainted with our new method by these aids, might adopt so much of it into such words, or parts of words of his common writing as he found

gave

gave no stoppage to his pen, nor retarded the speed of others in reading them. Suppose he began with the little particles “to, tu ;” “be, bi ;” “for, fawr ;” “from, frawm ;” or “some, sum ;” “come, cum ;” or the “termination, fion.” When these are familiar, he may proceed to a fresh adoption from time to time until the whole class is completed.

Patience and assiduity will effect a thing easily that could not be done at once without immense labour. I can set down a word or two in my own way currently enough, but while at work upon the long specimen herein before exhibited, I found it require constant close attention and subject me to a continual hazard of blunders. I should not have thought it worth inserting for very few are likely to have patience to read it thro, unless as it might serve for a vocabulary of such words as happen to be there contained.

The

The same purpose might be advanced in dictionaries, if the compilers of them would follow the example of Lyttleton, who accompanies his Latin words with Greek of the same signification enclosed in a parenthesis, so they might after every English word spelt the common way parenthesize the same again in the other characters. By this method our language would be transmitted down entire to future generations. New dictionaries, or new editions of dictionaries are produced every twenty years, and in them such among posterity as shall think it worth their while to examine, may see exactly how their ancestors spoke as well as wrote in every successive twenty years; whereas in our present manner of disguising our language upon paper it would be impossible to conjecture how we found our words: unless we suppose they will adhere inviolably to our pronunciation, which is an hypothesis not to be admitted.

If

If we desire they should, it is incumbent upon us to leave it visible upon record, or else they may deviate from us without knowing.

USEFUL FOR TEACHING FRENCH AND
ENGLISH.

Should it be deemed of no concern to posterity to know exactly our manner of sounding our words, for no doubt they will find some way of expressing themselves to one another, by what sounds or what characters it is no matter, yet we shall find it useful to know it ourselves for learning and teaching foreign languages. There are many syllables of French and English corresponding in sound tho written differently, but we cannot find them for want of knowing the powers of our letters. If an Englishman could be persuaded to read "Ollom ode dep orry" or "E nem " on au dee re-eng" a Frenchman would

take

take him for a brother “ Monsieur ” and think he said “ A la mode de Paris ” or “ Il ne m’en a dit rien.”

My countrymen will see why I write “ au dee ” for “ a dit,” because they have been told that “ a ” is alway called “ au ” and “ i, e ” in the French, but they will wonder to see me express “ a la ” by “ ollo,” which they are ready to swear has neither an “ a ” nor an “ au ” belonging to it, nor any other vowel besides “ o,” but if upon trying the experiment they should find the Frenchman understand them, they might then be convinced they should take a false oath, and could not speak a short “ o ” without a consonant following it, nor then without changing it into another letter.

In like manner you might make a Frenchman read English by writing “ Ev-“ rib adiz bizness is no badiz bizness,”

we shall understand him saying "Every
body's business is nobody's business;"
but then you must first have set him right
in the quantities and that they are all
short except "no," or else he will be apt
to turn "iz" into "ease," and so of the
rest.

Foreigners in general seem fonder of
long vowels than we, tis chiefly this way
they disguise our language, particularly
in the word "service" where they sound
all their letters as we do, only by length-
ening the vowels they draw it out into
"fare-veece." We charge them falsely
here with changing our letters, for we
change them ourselves without knowing
it in changing our quantities, therefore I
could not write a long "fer" nor a long
"vis" without substituting an "a" in the
room of "e" and "ee" for "i," and
following the awkward custom of tacking
on an "e" behind, not to stand there as
a letter,

a letter, but to ascertain the quantity of the preceding vowels.

For there is a nearer affinity than is commonly imagined between the French vowels and our own, when coming before a consonant and consequently short; “ab” alone is peculiar to ourselves, “eb” and “ib” are just the same as theirs, “ob” answers to their “ab.” “Ub,” altho their own “e” feminine before “b,” must seem awkward to them as being never used to find it begin a syllable; yet I think they might familiarize themselves to it from some of their own words by transferring a letter, as Boyer does when he teaches us to pronounce “parle rarabe;” I humbly conceive the article “le” has an “e” feminine in it, for if it were an “e” open there would be no difference between “le Roi” and “les Rois;” if then they would repeat “le bon Garçon,” and observing carefully

fully what sounds they use, would assort them thus “ leb on Garçon,” they would find the syllable “ leb ” exactly answering the English “ lub,” then dropping the “ l ” they might soon perfect themselves in “ ub ” and from thence pass on to “ uc, ” “ ud, uf ” and so forth.

By the like expedient an Englishman on dividing “ trusty ” into “ tru-sty ” might extract the “ tre ” of “ ventre ; ” or if I am wrong in “ le ” the experiment may be tried in those adverbs which are formed by the addition of “ ment ” to words ending with an “ e ” feminine, as “ pleinement, gravement,” from the middle of which the French may pick out “ nem, vem,” and the English upon having them written “ plainummong, grau-yummong ” might cut off the “ mong ” and leave the “ plainu, gravu ” and so both become possessed in full feizin of the French “ e ” feminine, and the English

short "u" which I have characterized by "v."

When our vowels turn the corner to skulk behind the consonant, we make them turn their coats too, and assume quite another form; "a" is now no longer our own peculiar as it was in "ab," for "ba" takes the likeness of Monsieur "be;" "be" has exactly the voice of a French "bi;" "bi" resembles nothing upon earth, and indeed "i" is not any vowel at all, but ought rather to be classed among the diphthongs; "o" shows himself the most judicious of the five, for his turning is a real conversion from wrong to right, and is a repentance not to be repented of, for "bo" keeps his tenour wherever he goes and will serve equally to frighten a goose throughout all nations of Europe; only the French make some attempts to corrupt his purity by thrusting an impudent "u" upon him, for they

they speak “bon Garçon” much as they would if they saw it written “boun Gar-goun;” but last of all comes “u” to bring up the rear; his change from “ub” to “bu” can neither be called an amendment nor a depravation, because there are two letters expressed by one and the same character, but answers to the French “bou,” unless when some of us affect to make it a diphthong by calling it “bew.”

And here it is somewhat ridiculous to observe the fascination of sight upon our ears; we reckon “i” among our vowels, and must have passed some years in the world and maintained some arguments upon the subject before we can be convinced of its being a diphthong; the French are more honest upon this article, for they allow their “i” to be such in “yin, fin, destin,” yet they carry the matter too far in classing “ou” with their diphthongs, altho it has certainly as simple

a sound as any in their alphabet ; but here we come up with them again by making a diphthong of "au," for I will say this for my brave countrymen, that they do not fall short of any people upon earth in disdain of subjection to all rules whether civil, religious or prudential, whenever they think their liberties of acting, or thinking, or fancying endangered thereby. Nor have our neighbours just cause to be angry with us for abusing poor "a" since they deal as wickedly with "o" by triphthongizing him into "eau," perhaps they do it to shew his mighty strength, for that he can perform singly what requires the united strength of three other letters.

The comparing the several ways wherein the same sounds are expressed upon paper would greatly facilitate the learning of modern languages, for most of the syllables might be so written

as

as that the learner reading them his own way shall fall upon the very sound you would have him; the hardest task with an Englishman would be to imitate the French "j" because he always adds a "d" before his own, yet I think we have some words whereby he might be let into the secret; he can say "measure, treasure" fast enough, let him then be advertised that in so doing he talks the French words "mes jours, tres jours," differing only in the quantity of his first syllables, which the Frenchman pronounces long.

But such words in both languages as carry sounds that will match against one another cannot often be found, unless any body would take the pains to make himself expert and ready in using the reformed alphabet, with the addition of a few characters to express those sounds which the French have peculiar to themselves, for then I apprehend he might do it com-

pleatly, and vocabularies might be formed in French as well as English wherein the learner would find the respective words explained in the second column by characters and sounds wherewith he is already familiar, still applying the tittle as a mark of quantity, devising some other little mark for doubtful vowels, that is, such as may be spoken long or short as you please.

To be the better understood I shall subjoin a few words as a specimen of the vocabulary to be ranged in four columns;

French common,	Ditto reformed.	English common.	Ditto reformed.
Bouton	Bütong	Button	Butt
Bouleverser	Büluverser	Overturm	Overturm
Nation	Nawlion	Nation	Néhion
Guerrier	Gérrier	Warrior	Uawrjer
Choquante	hocawntu	Shocking	hawcinq
Trajedie	Trajedi	Tragedy	Tradjeti

The sounds peculiar to the French, I take it, are their " a," " eis" masculine and

and open, and "u." It would make matters easier to the French learner if we would be complaisant enough to resign up our "a" to be pronounced his way, we might then discard the character "au" and take the little great "A" for our own use in writing "And, Ant:" in this case we should want only one new character for the French "u," to which suppose we assign the "v" inverted, "ʌ".

They have already found means to distinguish their "e" masculine by an acute accent "é," and this letter together with the open "e" and "a" are formed from our own sounds uttered with a little wider extension of mouth. Therefore our masters are continually plying us with "Ouvrez la bouche, Monsieur, ouvrez la bouche:" we laugh at them for cutting faces, and they in return charge us with mumbling and whispering. For certainly the French have a greater agility and wider stretch of cheeks

cheeks than we, so that you may often look down their throats, as they seem to confess by their phrase "rire à gorge "deployée, laugh with a throat dif- "played."

The French "a" seems to be made up of our "au" and "a," and their "e" masculine of our "e" and "a" compounded together, not in a diphthong but as the sound of two instruments playing unison in a concert.

The greatest elongation of an English mouth appears in "a" and "au," where it forms an elipsis, the longest diameter lies horizontal in "a" and perpendicular in "au," but the Frenchman's "a" preserves both diameters in their full length, thereby throwing his mouth into a circle like the mouth of a trumpet. A person well versed in both languages may try the experiment with English "a" as in "ab," and

and “ e ” open, repeating these several times he will find that in passing from one to the other the corners of his lips draw out almost to his ears ; if he does the like with “ a ” as in “ ale ” and “ e ” masculine his cheeks will keep their posture, but he may feel his tongue and jaw give way a little downwards ; then in passing from the true English “ a ” to the French “ a ” he will make no other alteration than by the fall of his jaw bringing the whole aperture to a perfect circle ; lastly in passing from the French “ ou ” to the “ u ” he will only perceive the tip of his tongue and lips shoot forward about a quarter of an inch, thereby straitening the orifice.

LETTERS PRONOUNCED by BRUTE ANIMALS.

It may be matter of some curiosity to ourselves and service to posterity, to pick out such of our letters as we can find current

rent among the brute creation, by this means we shall bring our vocal sounds to stand upon perpetual record, for how much soever the speeches of many-voiced man may fluctuate, I presume the animals will speak the same language a thousand years hence as they do now. Serena and her friend Euphronyme, who have very good ears and more than female attention, assure me the inhabitants of my rookery use the genuine French "a;" not that we can expect to learn the exact French pronunciation from Maitre Courbeau sur un arbre perche, for he has a natural hoarseness in his voice, which cannot be charged upon our neighbours of France, yet after being instructed to blend our "a" and "au" together in one sound, we may observe how he does it in his "kaw" and thus may learn the difference between the two sounds, where he cannot teach us the proper tone of either. Therefore I wish Quintilian had condescended to

to let down the rookish language upon paper, we might then have known whether foreigners or ourselves pronounce the Roman "a" right: for if he had written "ea" we must have given up the point to them, but if he had spelt it "caw" answering to our "kaw," we might have presumed they had spoken their "a" and "au" more like ours than those of other nations.

In like manner our peculiar English "a" of "after" stands distinguished upon record by the duck from the "a's" of "alter" and "ague," for her "quaak" cannot be expressed either by "quawk" or "quake." For my part I am not sure that I hear the initial "c" or "qu" of those animals, who seem to me rather to begin with their respective vowels, but I certainly do not hear the "m" in the "mu" or "moo" ascribed to the cow both in the Roman classes and our own nurseries,

nurseries, for in my ear her common lowing is a diffyllable consisting of “ o” and “ u” or “ oo;” sometimes indeed she forms a trifyllable, beginning her “ o” with the lips close, which produces an “ m” asperime aspirated, that is blended in one sound with a guttural “ r” instead of an “ h.” For tho we always make our “ r” with the tip of the tongue, we might do it at the throat, and whoever has a turn for such sport may play several pretty tricks with it.

For this “ r” when performed alone resembles exactly the growl of a dog; when spoken with the short “ u” prolonged, not as two distinct letters but united together in one sound, it imitates the grunt of a hog, for if you attend to the hog himself you will find he spells his grunt without either “ g” or “ nt;” when added in like manner to “ m” it makes the grumble of a cow; when mingled with “ oa” in

in one continued note like that of three instruments in a concert, it produces the croak of a London raven. Ours in the country breathing a purer air, change the canine “r” for a human, or sometimes soften it into an “l,” crying, “coroc, “coroc, coloc, coloc,” with both vowels short and the last of them accented. From whence we may gather that whatever becomes of the Latin “a,” we must needs give up the “alpha” to foreigners, because the Greeks giving their raven the name she assumed to herself with the addition only of a terminating “s,” called her “corax,” which therefore should be read rather in the French manner than ours, for there is no spice of the English “a” in her language.

The same use may be made of “inugitus” for the lowing of a cow, and “rugitus” for the roar of a lion, to prove the Latin “u” was not a French “u” nor

an English short “u,” they being both by far too delicate ever to proceed from the mouth of a cow or a lion; much less ought we like many great scholars to pronounce “ inewgitus,” for this would carry the idea of the cat rather than a cow. There are other Latin words derived from the pure voice of nature, as the “ yagitus,” probably spoken “ waugitus,” of a child, the “ balatus” of a sheep, “ ululatus” of a wolf, “ hinnitus” of a horse, “ murmur” of bees and purling streams, “ stridor” of geese, “ strepitus” of water fowl, with many more which any body who has a mind to amuse himself that way, may collect and remark upon at pleasure.

Now to return from our first cousins the brutes to our brethren the French, children of the same father Adam, let us consider the peculiarities of our language for them to learn, and I believe we can produce no more than five, which are our three “ a’s,” in “ all, ale,” and “ ant,” and our

our two theta's; for the two first they need only moderate their grimace, and for the third shorten the perpendicular diameter of their mouth; for the "th's" they may receive some help from my observations in former pages concerning their formation from "d" and "t," and when masters of either they will quickly get the other, their ear having already marked the difference between them; for when a Frenchman first comes among us, if he would say "that is neither thick nor thin," he pronounces "dot eez nayder tick nore" "tin," you never hear him say "tot is" "nayter dick nore din," which shows foreigners perceive "th" has not always the same sound sooner than we do ourselves.

There are some other peculiarities on both sides arising from the junction of sounds singly familiar to both: in our "oi" and "ay," as likewise the French "oi, ai" and "ei," the first vowel takes up the greater space of time in pronouncing, but

but in most other diphthongs the second vowel predominates; the “e” feminine in our “i” and “ou” is so instantaneous, that we cannot easily persuade ourselves there is one; and “e” open passes as rapidly in the “i” of “vin,” and “eu,” which make these four diphthongs extremely difficult to be attained by such as have not been inured to them in their infancy. There is a manifest difference between the diphthongs in “veine” and “vin,” which must spring solely from the quantity, for both contain the same component vowels.

“Y” symphonous with “i,” and “u” sometimes so with “ou,” coming before a vowel answer to “y” and “w,” but are generally not quite so short, as you may see by comparing the “yen” in the sentence, “Il y en a trente” and “oui” with “yon” in “yonder” and “we,” for I think the former take a little longer puff of breath than the latter; yet sometimes they are equally short, as in the words “cuire, suite, gagner,

"gagner, feignant," which we could read without teaching if we saw them written, "queer, sweet, gonyare, fainyong."

When "u" and "o" are very short in a diphthong they are so like that one may supply the other's place; by this means you may bring an Englishman to the true pronunciation of "roi, soi," and the triphthong "loin" by writing them "rwaw, fwaw, lwawing," for while you talk to him of an "o" you will never get him out of his own "oi," similar to the "ay" in "ayez." Upon these niceties in the similitude or variance of the several vowels I apprehend the art of language, so far as relates only to the utterance of it, depends.

I am far from pretending to a thorough skill in the French pronunciation, having had no opportunity of speaking the language these forty years, unless you will allow reading to myself to be speaking, therefore cannot warrant the justness of

the comparisons drawn between their letters and our own, nor the operations of the organs in forming them. Nevertheless what I have suggested thereupon may serve for the lines of a plan which those who know better may rectify or improve as they see wanting; and I presume it may lessen their trouble by furnishing some strokes that will not need re-touching.

If persons of accuracy, well versed in modern languages, would draw out a scheme and compile an alphabet with vocabularies in the manner here attempted, I am persuaded any of them might be taught a stranger as compleatly as can be done by book. I do not say he would ever make himself perfect this way, nor without aid of masters or a sufficient converse among the natives, but he might make a considerable progress which must shorten the remainder of his work and enable him to profit better by what is afterward thrown in at his ear.

There-

Therefore we see masters always teach by grammars, and I believe find it useful to themselves as well as their scholars by directing the method wherein they are to proceed; and I am apt to think that if we had an alphabet and vocabularies as projected above, they would answer both purposes more effectually than any grammar yet extant; for the scholar would be instructed to distinguish sounds from one another, as that French "u" is not English "u" nor our short "o" the same with theirs, tho he might want the master's help to form the particular sounds aright, and the master would have the points marked out whereto he is to direct his steps from time to time for correcting mistakes.

Besides as we have many masters come to us from the remote provinces who talk no better French than some of our school-masters do English, we might then have a faithful record of the genuine courtly pro-

nunciation, and they might set themselves right before they undertook to teach others.

C O N C L U S I O N.

I have now rummaged over all I could gather from my memory or reflection relating to vocal sounds in letters, syllables, words or measures, and shall resume my telescope bidding a final adieu to those trivial matters, with which perhaps I shall be censured for having concerned myself so deeply. But now the trouble of collecting is over there will be none in exhibiting the produce, and I may throw out my heap to open view, if my Bibliopola should pronounce it likely to be thought worth attention, without anxiety for the success because not of consequence enough to raise a solicitude, as having no connection with the interests of religion or morality, the security of our excellent constitution, the preservation of the ballance of power in Europe, or improvement of trade, arts and manufactures.

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